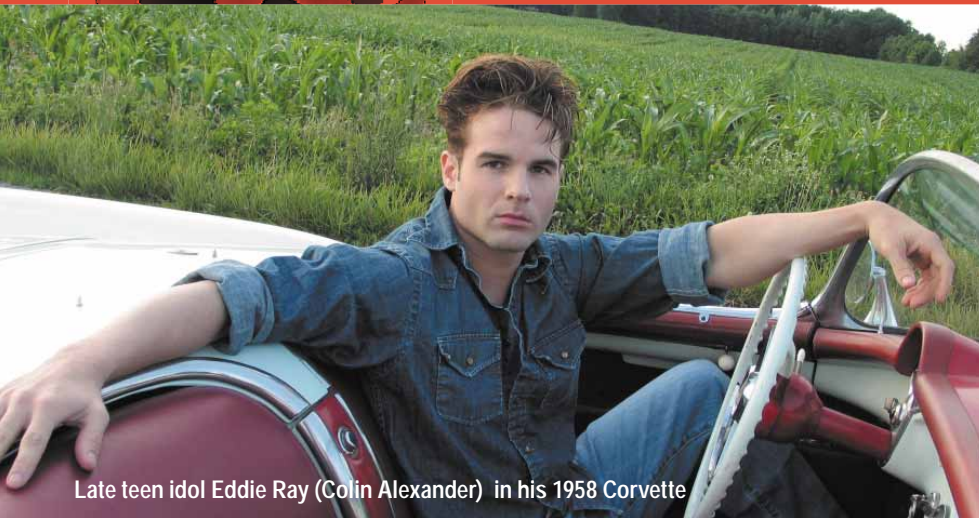


REEL LIFE

ADVENTURES IN MOVIE MAKING & DISTRIBUTION



Late teen idol Eddie Ray (Colin Alexander) in his 1958 Corvette

Journey to Self-Discovery —*Somewhere In Indiana*

By Chera Federle

After 18 rolls of Mini-DV tape, 750 feet of 16 mm film, 20 cans of tuna fish, and 94 hours of shooting, on July 18 director Don Boner announced, “It’s a wrap.” The production phase of *Somewhere In Indiana* was complete.

As a screenwriter living in southeastern Indiana, I had wanted to get involved with the regional independent scene in order to gain some valuable hands-on production experience. In my extensive search for the right project in which to participate, I found Don Boner’s crew call for his second feature movie. I emailed him right away, and offered to contribute wherever needed.

Little did I know when I volunteered to crew on *Somewhere In Indiana*, that it would be one of the best experiences of my life — working with a talented director and a group of wonderful actors and crew, all collaborating diligently to make the movie a success.

In 2002, Boner had attended the New York Film Academy’s four-week workshop and then wrote and directed three shorts in rapid succession: *Ripple* in August of 2002, the *Bumbling Detective* in October, and *Welcome to Kentuckiana* in November. The following year he directed his first feature script, *Losers Lounge*, and was awarded Best Film Noir at the 2004 Bare Bones International Film Festival.

I first met Don at the auditions for *Somewhere In Indiana* in early March, 2004. He’s a pleasant guy with a smile that reflects his enthusiasm and passion for life. Having read the script three times prior to the auditions, I felt a strong connection to the characters and the story he created. As a James Dean fan — a naturally instilled part of my Hoosier roots — I found it interesting that Don wove his story around a reflection of the late screen legend through the character of Eddie Ray.

Eddie Ray died in 1957 at the age of 24 in a motorcycle accident on his way to a cycle race. In his brief career he starred in three movies,

“The Very Tall Texan,” “Southwest of Paradise,” and his most famous film, “Rebel Without a Reason.”

But the most captivating element was that of the five main characters. Four with different ethnic backgrounds — each with his own inner struggles that echo the concerns and issues of present day society — come together to visit the hometown of their idol, Eddie Ray, as if it were the only recourse in solving their problems.

Adam, a white man, who has lost his job, whose wife has cheated on him, and who needs time to sort through his life. Jane, a young Asian-American beauty, raised without a mother, an experience which leaves her emotionally incomplete. Dan, a Lebanese-American business owner, still grieving over the death of his young bride, could shine like a star if only he could push past the heartbreak and

move forward. Sam, a Jewish-American with a lot of pent-up anger, worries about how he will be perceived as a result of his choices. And finally, Roy, the mysterious stranger who through his own “life” experiences is traveling (emotionally) in the same direction, and guides the others on the path to self-discovery.

The idea for *Somewhere In Indiana* came to Boner in late 2003. He was thinking about how folks make modern-day pilgrimages, seeking to “feel something” by being somewhere in particular, when, in reality, whatever they feel was always inside them. With ethnic conflicts and religious hatred dominating the international scene today, Boner created characters with different ethnic backgrounds to make a statement that, as he puts it, “we all can just get along, but only if we try.”

Initially, Boner thought there was no way he could make a movie from this idea. “Too many characters and too many locations,” he imagined. However, he was unable to get the idea out of his head, and a couple of weeks later, he contacted some of the actors he wanted to be a part of the project.

Once he started writing the screenplay in early December 2003, Boner received word that a close friend of his had passed away. Reflecting on the fleeting nature of life, Boner was determined to move ahead quickly and knocked the script out in about two weeks.

The opening scene was shot in February, 2004, and full-blown production commenced at various locations in and around the Indianapolis area in mid-May. It took a while to secure all the locations — early May for the drag strip in Bunker Hill, mid-May for



Ronald (David Briggs) consoles Jane (Janet Vuong) at her mother’s grave site

REEL LIFE *Somewhere in Indiana*

the drive-in in Manchester, and early June for the ideal hotel in Franklin. Nevertheless, except for a few sets of keys being misplaced, everything seemed to fall right into place.

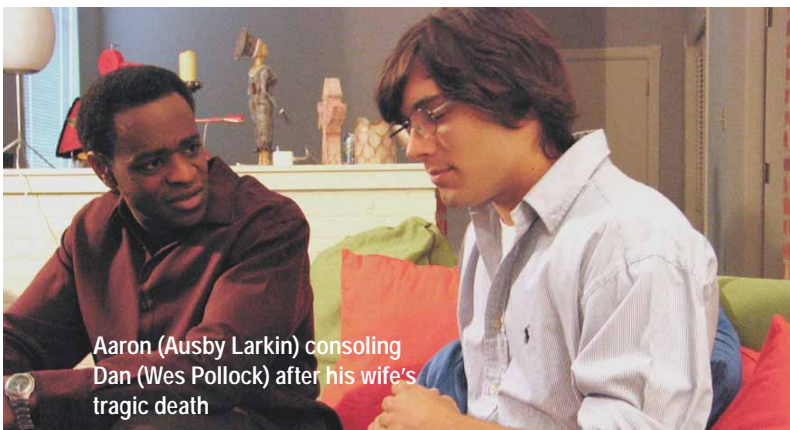
A few casting changes were made prior to shooting. Due to other commitments that caused a conflict with schedules, Don was faced with the challenge of re-casting the lead roles of Sam and Dan. This resulted in a total character change for Sam — changing his ethnicity from Latin American to Jewish-American.

Janet Vuong was initially slotted in the role of Jane's mother in a flashback scene. The actor from New York who Boner had cast to play Jane was going to drive down for the script reading, but cancelled because her father was in a serious car accident. She needed to fly to California. Later, she called back; her father was doing well and she was ready to make the trip to Indianapolis. The next day, Don received word that she was involved in a car accident driving to Indianapolis from New York. She took this as a sign to drop out of the project, and Vuong stepped in to play Jane.

There are a lot of stories that I am positive the cast and crew could share about their individual experiences on the set, but the most memorable are those that affected us all, the small blessings that reflect the tone of the story. During our first long weekend, cast and crew set out from Bunker Hill to Manchester to shoot the drive-in scene. It was lunchtime, and due to time limitations, we planned to pull off the side of the road to eat. As fortune would have it, the spot where we chose to stop was on the property of a true angel, Dana Beddle.

Beddle saw us and thought we were having car trouble, so she motored down her lane in her golf cart to offer help. When Don explained to her that we were making a movie, she invited us up to her house to use her picnic tables — something not too many people would offer these days. As it turns out, Dana's property was the ideal location for a scene that was originally scheduled to be shot later in the day. When we were finished, she kindly lead our caravan on the quickest route to Manchester. Her generous hospitality will not be forgotten.

The next day, our first scene was at a cemetery where the four characters visit the grave of Eddie Ray. We pulled up and immediately began to block the scene only to find a headstone with the surname RAY on one side. The other side listed the first names of the deceased. It was perfect — eerie, but perfect. I asked Don if he knew about this before hand. He didn't.



Aaron (Ausby Larkin) consoling Dan (Wes Pollock) after his wife's tragic death



Eddie Ray (Colin Alexander) locates his mother, the prostitute Hallie (Suzanne Sadler) from his movie *Southwest of Paradise*

Among the resourceful people committed to making *Somewhere In Indiana* a success were Steve "Papaw" Pyatte, Ron Calhoun and Clayton Calhoun. Pyatte jumped in headfirst, with a passion he carries for all of his endeavors, providing the vintage motorcycle needed for the Eddie Ray museum location and participating as an extra. Ron and Clayton Calhoun provided hot-rods for the drag race scene, and didn't complain once about the five hours it took to clean the tar out of the tires!

The professionalism and kindheartedness of the Indiana talent proves that Hollywood isn't the only place to find "A-list" actors. Leads Jason Kistler (Adam), Reg Land (Roy), Janet Vuong (Jane), Wes Pollock (Dan), and B.J. Whetstine (Sam) projected a spirit that all actors should portray on and off the screen.

The movie is currently in post-production. When I view the rough-cuts that reach my inbox at least once a week, I am in awe of the intensity of every scene. With the combined efforts of Boner, DP Lee Edgewood and editor Thomas Johnson, the true essence of the story has been captured.

I am so proud to say that I am a part of all of this. I anxiously await the premiere, which will be held in Indianapolis sometime in late November/early December 2004. *Somewhere In Indiana* will be submitted to several festivals throughout the United States. The hopes that Don has for this movie are that as many people as possible will view it and come away with a greater understanding of their own life's journey. 317-445-5287, donboner@ameritech.net www.somewhereinin.com. ■

Somewhere in Indiana - Cast: Jason Kistler, Reg Land, Janet Vuong, Wes Pollock, B.J. Whetstine, David Briggs, Colin Alexander, Ausby Larkin Jr., Jeff Angel, Jim Dougherty, Robert Charlock, Adrienne Reisweg. Crew: Don Boner, Gerald Peterson, Lee Edgewood, Dale Grant, Chera Federle, Thomas Johnson, Michael Prediger, Mark Merritt, Steve "Papaw" Pyatte, Lisa Dane, Diana Rooks, Larna Kay Smith, David Finegan, Brooke Bartling, Ed Kessner.

Chera Federle is an optioned screenwriter who served as assoc producer, UPM, script supervisor and script committee member for *Somewhere In Indiana*. She's currently working with director Catherine Crouch as script consultant and prod coord on Crouch's latest feature. Email cfederle@nalu.net.