#### ECHO BRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT

### A film by Tjardus Greidanus



Starring
Escher Holloway
Rachel Brosnahan
Jack Donner
and Eric Roberts

### Story

He's a 17-year-old gang leader trying to make a rep on the streets of New York in 1959. But Spider finds himself in way over his head when he steals a suitcase full of money from Casket Mike, a notorious gangster who wouldn't think twice about blowing away a punk hood if it means getting his cash back.

On the run, Spider is taken in by Tamara, a sheltered young woman whose reclusive uncle, the legendary mobster Big Didi, has his own history with Casket Mike. Spider's safe for the time being, but dependent on Tamara, a girl with a mind of her own. It's a collision of two lives, but the unlikely pair soon discovers a depth of feeling that neither has experienced before.

When Big Didi discovers Spider, the old gangster cuts a deal with the young gang leader: cold cash, and lots of it, if he will kill Casket Mike. But there's one catch – he can never see Tamara again. Now Spider is faced with the decision of his life: to enter a full-fledged life of crime and gain the rep he's always wanted or make a choice for real love.

Produced, written & directed by Tjardus Greidanus Produced by Laura Davis and Hugh Aodh O'Brien

Executive Producers: John Cordell, Chris Concannon and Rob Gordon

Co-producers: Cathy Henderson-Martin and Cait Murray

Director of Photography: Michal Dabal

Production Designers: Justine Seymour & Danielle Laubach

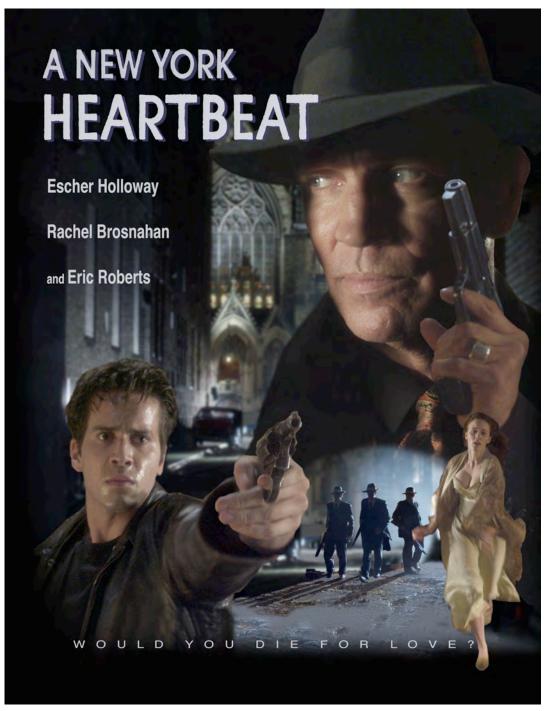
Editors: Edgar Burcksen, A.C.E. & Tjardus Greidanus

Sound Design & Mix: Al Nelson & Pete Horner

Costume Designer: Justine Seymour

Music: Bobby Johnston

Casting: Cathy Henderson-Martin, C.S.A.



94 min • Color • 2K & HDCAMSR • 5.1 & Stereo • USA • 2013

#### **Domestic sales:**

Kevin Tannehill Echo Bridge Entertainment (323) 658-7900 ktannehill@ebellc.com

#### Foreign sales:

Emilia Nuccio
Echo Bridge Entertainment
(914) 502-1288
enuccio@ebellc.com

#### **Press**

#### Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

"The two young actors at the heart of this romance have genuine on-screen chemistry that puts every other pairing on screen this year to shame."

#### Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

"An homage to the gangster and troubled-youth B-movies of the '40s and '50s with lots of witty rapid-fire patter."

#### Pittsburgh Magazine

"Spider's crew of hoodlums has more in common with the kids in *Stand by Me* than big-screen mafiosos. The speed with which the gang is swept up into trouble is a remedy to 100 bloated Hollywood setups."

#### The Strip!

"If a film can be both beautiful and desolate, this is a successful example. It's a brooding, shadow-filled film noir, only in color."







#### **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT by TJARDUS GREIDANUS**

When I wrote A New York Heartbeat I envisioned it as a mythic heroic journey of a young gang leader in New York in the late 1950s, torn between his loyalty to his gang and his love for the sheltered young woman who saves him. But I also wanted the audience to feel a sense of authenticity, that this story could have happened to real people. To capture the time and place, I steeped myself in research, reading countless books and articles about New York City in the 50s, the neighborhood gangs and the culture of juvenile delinquency that often signified an important rite of passage in the life of a young man. These first-hand accounts helped me understand the hierarchy in gangs as well as how they talked. My research, which went on for a number of months before I actually sat down to write, informed the story and script and helped me provide my cast with moment-to-moment authenticating details and anecdotes that helped ground their performances in the real thing.

Research also helped create the look of *Heartbeat*. I think the best thing a director can do for his cast is to create a fully elaborate world in which the actors can immerse themselves. The spirit lingers in places -- there's life in the walls and the physical reality can talk to an actor. The story required scope and I didn't want to be limited to shooting a narrow patch of brick wall on the side of one building because that was all we could afford to capture the style of the period. So I spent three months scouting locations that were so evocative that a viewer could imagine himself on a street corner in Brooklyn in 1959. Ironically, we ended up shooting in Pittsburgh, where soot-stained brick, industrial decay and rusted bridges suggested post-war New York.

The pace of shooting was very intense – 22 days from beginning to end. You can't fly solo as a director. I wanted to work with a team that shared my passion. Producers Laura Davis and Hugh Aodh O'Brien, production designers Justine Seymour and Danielle Laubach and director of photography Michal Dabal accepted the challenge with enthusiasm. We dove in together, sharpened our skills and had a great deal of fun. I believe our film reflects this -- the talent, professionalism and loving participation of everyone who worked on *A New York Heartbeat*. I sincerely hope you agree.



Escher Holloway as "Spider"



Escher Holloway and Rachel Brosnahan ("Tamara")



Eric Roberts ("Casket Mike") and Escher Holloway



The gang

### **Cast Bios**



At 17, Escher Holloway ("Spider") knew definitively that he wanted to be an actor and he knew why. Starring with Steven Weber in *Choose Connor*, a 2007 political drama, the Port Townsend, Washington native was fascinated by the process of exploring and understanding the dynamics and inner forces driving his character. Subsequent roles in CSI: NY and the romantic comedy Getting That Girl, starring opposite Gia Mantegna, reinforced his belief that acting is not only a journey into a character's mind but also a fascinating process for an actor of "getting so comfortable in one's skin that the camera and outside world fall away."

It was this commitment to bringing his entire self to a role that moved director Tjardus Greidanus to cast Escher in the lead role of Spider in *A New York Heartbeat*. "He changed the temperature in the room the minute he walked into the audition," says Greidanus. "I was looking for someone who is fueled by fearlessness and the indefinable top-dog swagger of a natural leader. Escher built that character from the ground up. He has a raw unpredictability that stems from hair-trigger impulses. Yet he also has conveys a raw containment that's very arresting."

Rachel Brosnahan ("Tamara") will be familiar to audiences from her role in House of Cards, the David Fincher-Kevin Spacey Netflix series. Recognized by the Chicago Tribune in 2009 as one of "Chicago's Rising Stars" for her performance in *UP* at the Steppenwolf Theatre, she went on to guest-star on television series including Gossip Girl, In Treatment, CSI: Miami, The Good Wife and Grey's Anatomy. Rachel co-starred opposite Emma Thompson, Jeremy Irons and Viola Davis in Beautiful Creatures, the Warner Bros. film based on the bestselling young adult novel, and recently made her Broadway debut in The Big Knife.



Rachel came to her role as "Tamara" late in the casting process. "Of all the characters in the film, Tamara was the most difficult to cast," recalls director Tjardus Greidanus. "I was looking for an intelligence, serenity and honesty that goes beyond solid acting. In these respects, Rachel claimed her role. She is authentic in how she tackles a character, and brings a depth and insight to the part that is mesmerizing."



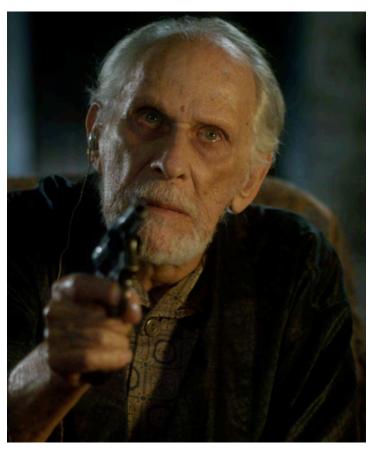
Eric Roberts has racked up an impressive list of accolades over decades in the business. In 1986, he was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor in Runaway Train, for which he also received a Golden Globe nomination. He also earned Golden Globe nominations for Star 80 (1983) and King of the Gypsies (1978).

Roberts received critical acclaim at the Sundance Festival for his roles in A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints and It's My Party. Other notable performances include his roles in The Pope of Greenwich Village, Raggedy Man, The Specialist, The Dark Knight and The Expendables.

As a television actor, Roberts made a profound impact in the Emmynominated adaptation of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* directed by Jonathan Kaplan and co-starring Anthony Edwards.

Director Tjardus Greidanus cast Roberts as Casket Mike for his ability to infuse humanity into his roles. Greidanus says, "It was essential to have someone whose menacing threat can be felt, even when not present in the scene."

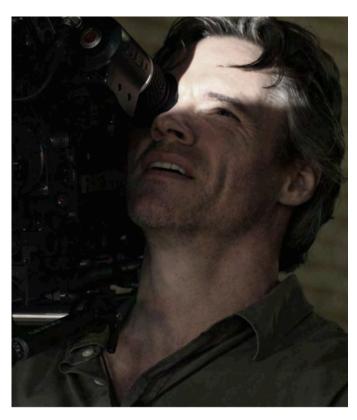
Audiences will recognize **Jack Donner** from his appearances in Transformers: Dark of the Moon, Clint Eastwood's J. Edgar and dozens of other films and television series. Jack began his career in 1950 on the New York stage. After re-locating to Los Angeles, he founded the Oxford Theatre, whose alumni include director Barry Levinson and actors Craig T. Nelson and Don Johnson. Jack's television work from that period includes the role of Romulan Sub-Commander Tal in the original *Star Trek* series. He took a hiatus to earn a degree in psycho-therapy and returned to acting in 1991, adding another 25 features and 35 television roles to his professional resume including



a recurring role in *Star Trek: Enterprise* and appearances in *Criminal Minds, Cold Case, The District, Frasier, Alias, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Bones, Hot in Cleveland* and *Ghost Whisperer* 

"Mesmerizing" is the word most often attributed to Jack's portrayal of Big Didi in *A New York Heartbeat*. Director Tjardus Greidanus agrees. "I was looking for someone with a lethal presence always in reserve, yet tempered by his deep love for his niece. Jack was able to inhabit that paradox."

### Filmmaker Bios



A New York Heartbeat is the first narrative film by Dutch-born writer-director **Tjardus Greidanus.** Though raised on farms in Holland and Alberta, Canada, he was fascinated by the hardboiled urban crime dramas that came out of Hollywood in the late 40's and 50's. Inspired by those films, Greidanus directed his first student feature at the age of 16 after his family immigrated to Canada.

The Fire Within won the Alberta Motion Picture Industry Award for best amateur film and opened the door to film school. After graduating from the Southern Alberta Institute with honors, he worked in Vancouver as an assistant director and locations manager on numerous movies and television series.

Greidanus then moved to Los Angeles where he shot, directed and edited HBO specials and DVD content for many of director Michael Mann's films and series including *Ali*, *Collateral*, *Miami Vice*, *Public Enemies*, *Luck* and Mann's upcoming untitled feature. He was Director of Photography on the PBS series *Wired Science*, and recently directed, shot and edited *The Shot Felt 'Round the World*, a one-hour documentary about the Salk polio vaccine that aired on the Smithsonian Networks.

Although he envisioned *A New York Heartbeat* as the heroic journey of a young gang leader in New York in the 1950s, he wanted the audience to feel a sense of authenticity, that the story could have happened to real people: "You create a scene and an environment and the situation, and try to imagine what it would have felt like and looked like at that moment. The challenge was trying to make 1959 come alive, to be as vivid, as complex, as detailed as any moment tonight in 2013."

Producer **Laura Davis** first found success as a disc jockey for the legendary L.A. rock station KLOS. She segued into producing "behind the scenes" documentaries for some of the world's most respected directors including Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese, Jim Brooks, Mike Nichols and Michael Mann. Beginning with *Dances With Wolves* and continuing through Mann's upcoming cyber-thriller starring Chris Hemsworth.

Laura's documentaries have been seen on HBO, Showtime, Starz and numerous DVDs and Blu-rays. She also produced the prize-winning documentary *Everest: On Location in the Death Zone* (Miramax Home



Video), The Chefs and the Architect for The Food Network, and The Shot Felt 'Round the World, an hour documentary about the Salk polio vaccine written and directed by Tjardus Greidanus, which premiered on the Smithsonian Networks with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Laura developed and executive produced the movies-of-theweek. Still Holding On: The Legend of Cadillac Jack (CBS) and Someone Else's Child (ABC). Her next film with director Tjardus Greidanus is Hellbent, an action film and coming of age story.



Producer/Stunt Coordinator **Hugh Aodh O'Brien** is a highly experienced stunt coordinator, stuntman/actor, stunt rigger and 2nd unit director with over 25 years in the entertainment industry. He has worked on over 400 productions, including features, television, live shows, commercials, photo shoots, Imax films, music videos, interactive and internet projects. His extensive resume has resulted in a solid foundation in both traditional and cutting edge technologies and an enduring love of telling stories.

Hugh was inducted into the Stuntmen's Association of Motion Pictures (SAMP) in 2000. He is also a member of Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA), Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, World Stunt Academy and the Directors Guild of America. He is owner of Variegated Enterprises Inc., an entertainment industry company that supplies stunt and rigging equipment as well as action consulting services. *A New York Heartbeat* is his second producing credit following 2010's *Father vs. Son*.

### **Behind-the-Scenes Cinematography**



"From our initial talks, I knew that Tjardus wanted a noir-inspired look," says Director of Photography **Michal Dabal**. "We watched many films from that period including *On the Waterfront* (1954), which was shot by Boris Kaufman, *The Third Man* (1949) by British cinematographer Robert Krasker and too many films to name by the great cinematographers John Alton and James Wong Howe. From there, we discussed how to take it in a new direction and experimented with modern looks. The visual structure for the film had to be simple and hold the story firmly together. Most importantly we had to create a believable environment for the characters.

"The streets that the characters travel are unwelcoming. Photographically speaking, it is a place of extreme contrast and dark shadows. We over-exposed the pool of lights that Spider is walking through by 5 or 6 stops.

The warm and soft interiors of Tamara's loft, where Spider hides, were on the other side of that dark spectrum. Even then, in some scenes, when the sun is shining - the lighting is harsh on Spider, burning through his surrounding, a symbol of his ruggedness at the beginning and arching into tranquility and maturity at the end of the film.

"Every character in the story had his or her own lighting scheme. We tested with the actors for lighting during pre-production. The scenes with Eric Roberts ("Casket Mike") weren't scheduled until the third week of production, so we discovered his lighting when I first saw him on the set. In the scene where the gangsters are breaking into Didi's loft, Eric is walking calmly yet maliciously through the scene. Right before rolling the camera, we put a piece of muslin on the ground with a 2k light bounced into it and that was it. That was his lighting right there.

"On a 22-day shooting schedule, there's not much time to think, so most of the decisions are instinctual. Gaffer **Allan Barch** and key grip **Matthew Bulleri**, along with the rest of the crew, were fundamental in translating these decisions into practice. And with Tjardus's support, his camera background and understanding of what we were doing, I had the freedom to push for a more daring look of the film. Those 22 nights we spent in the streets of Pittsburgh filming *A New York Heartbeat* were among the most important moments in my life."

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Michal Dabal was born and raised in Warsaw, Poland, the son of a cinematographer and an actress. During his undergraduate studies, he directed and photographed the short film *Pralnia*. The film earned numerous awards at international festivals, many of them for Best Cinematography. While living in Europe, he met master cinematographer Janusz Kaminski for whom he apprenticed on Steven Spielberg's *Munich* and James L. Brooks' *How Do You Know?* After relocating to Los Angeles, he became a cinematography fellow at the American Film Institute Conservatory. *A New York Heartbeat* is his debut as director of photography on a feature film.

#### **Production & Costume Design**

"The world of a teenage street gang, mobsters running rackets in Brooklyn and a young girl cocooned on the top floor of a derelict hotel were the trigger for my imagination to run wild with this beautiful script," says costume and co-production designer **Justine Seymour**.

"Set in 1959 Brooklyn, I started my research with mobsters and street kids, icons of the time, movies and popular culture that the teenagers of that day might fashion themselves on. Armed with many great images, I got to work on the individual characters, creating a look that would be unique and personal in some way, allowing the actor to run with the details and bring the character to life.

"The brilliant Eric Roberts plays "Casket Mike," our villain. His character is wealthy through crime; his wardrobe needed to represent his power within the community: Italian 3-piece suits, dress shirts and ties, with a cashmere overcoat and a silk scarf. I wanted him to be the only character that had any red in his wardrobe.



The entire film is devoid of red apart from the single red carnation that sits proud in Casket Mike's collar in each scene. To me this represents a touch of danger, elegance and attention to detail, adding a layer to his character as the Don of his New York crime family.

"The apartment for the Mob is designed in a modern 1950's style. Green is the predominant color, as the darker greens represent masculinity with a conservative edge and imply wealth. **Danielle Laubach**, the co-production designer, and I chose to include blond wood, animal heads and cigars to build that world. We used modern (at that time) venetian blinds which gave director Tjardus Greidanus and cinematographer Michal Dabal a way to play with light and create a film noir feel.

"Spider and his gang are teenage street kids, entertaining themselves with petty street crime until they get mixed up in a much bigger game. Leather jackets and jeans, all things cool of that time, were appropriate for these boys. In the 1950's, things just seemed a bit larger than life. I looked at *West Side Story* for influence, and while that film was a tornado of color, movement and teenage emotion, I did borrow from the style. The iconic feel was something I wanted to have in my teenage gang: the high-waisted jeans, the high top Converse sneakers, the patches and, my own touch, the hats.



"I chose a big eagle for the back of Spider's jacket as this tied in with my design for our female role Tamara whom I designed as a caged bird. I wanted to link

Spider and Tamara visually, he with his eagle flying free and she with her origami birds and many bird cages in her apartment. Her entire world was the top floor of the old hotel and although she was well provided for, her freedom was denied. So she sneaks out at night to experience a small taste of life on the streets.

"Tamara's costumes are all based on movie star dresses of that period. I justified her wardrobe as being self-made from magazine clippings and books. When designing her room, Danielle and I made an area with a sewing dummy, sewing machine and many drawings and dress ideas pinned on her wall. Tamara spends her day reading, gardening and sewing. I wanted her wardrobe to be fun, young, colorful, full of positive life and beauty to contrast Spider's take on 1959 gang life.

"Tamara's apartment is full of soft furnishings that are sumptuous and elegant, taking us back 20 years to when the hotel was grand and in operation. Our heroine is an avid reader, replacing a classic education in school with self-learned skills through study. One of our art department helpers found 130 linear feet of old leather-bound schoolbooks on eBay; they became Tamara's library. The book case was constructed out of 50 old wooden apple boxes tied together with twine and we had to build a structure to support the boxes and the weight of the books, as a fight takes place in that location and I was concerned that if an actor were thrown against the bookcase there might be an injury. So hidden behind the burlap fake wall that separated our art department workspace and our shooting location, we built a frame to hold the bookcase/apple boxes safely and firmly.





"The story is set in Brooklyn but we shot Pittsburgh for NYC 1959. There were many challenges in creating the look on the streets. All the signage had to be taken down before we could shoot and then put back up at the end of the day. All the drainpipes and new materials had to be aged or hidden. Many wooden crates, old metal garbage cans, wooden boxes and vintage-looking trash were used to hide modern fixtures.

"Working in Pittsburgh was wonderful. I enjoyed the delicious crisp weather, the autumn colors, the aged skeleton of its famous steel industry. But most of all I adored the city's people, generous and supportive in every way imaginable."



Danielle Laubach and Justine Seymour

Fascinated by textured fabrics and body shapes, Justine Seymour was drawn into costume design. Starting with performance art costumes in the mid '80's, Justine designed the dance costumes for Seal's first performance on *Top of the Pops UK* and worked with Sinead O'Connor. Theater, television and dance followed until Justine found her career in film. Justine has designed over three dozen films including the indie hit *The Sessions*, TV shows and short films as well as many commercials. Now based in Los Angeles, Justine was delighted to find a whole new direction when she joined forces with co-designer Danielle Laubach to design not only the costumes for *A New York Heartbeat* but the production itself.

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Danielle Laubach has been designing for film and stage in Pittsburgh since 2008. In film, she has served as both production designer and art director. As a theatrical scene designer, Danielle's most recent work includes the Pittsburgh Opera's production of *Rinaldo* and the Carnegie Mellon University productions of *Richard III* and *A Dream Play*. For her earlier work, Danielle received the Barbizon Award for Design Excellence. Danielle recently earned an MFA in Scene Design from Carnegie Mellon University. *A New York Heartbeat* is her feature debut.

#### **Stunts**



"First a word about stunts, which are defined as any difficult feat requiring great skill and varying in scope, depending on the story. A New York Heartbeat's action ranged from fight scenes to gun battles, car crashes with priceless classics to climbing up an eight-story building," explains producerstunt coordinator Hugh Aodh O'Brien.

"I take pride in giving the audience a feeling that what they are seeing is real. To accomplish this, I let the actors do as much of the action as possible, without being irresponsible. One of the most memorable stunts was Spider's climb up the outside of the eight-story Granite Building in downtown Pittsburgh. There were many challenges for the production with this sequence. The building's façade was hand-carved in 1890 by Italian stonemasons, and there could be absolutely no damage. We solved this by using no cables or metal connections to the building, only specially designed soft attachment points strong enough to hold five tons each. Next, since we could not have our lead actor Escher Holloway climb higher than the first story, in one of the few places where we used a stunt double, we brought in expert climber Tom Prigg. To simulate the act of free climbing while keeping Tom safe, we set up a modified Top-Rope system that removed slack as he climbed so he couldn't fall more than a few feet before being caught. We used a special ¼" diameter rope that is invisible to the camera but strong enough to hold three tons. Because of the planning, we got the shot in one take! "I dreamed of doing stunts since I was eight years-old and feel blessed to be making my living doing what I love!"

### **PICTURE CARS**



"Co-Producer. Production Coordinator. Picture Car Coordinator. I wore many hats on *A New York Heartbeat*," says **Cait Murray**. When writer-director Tjardus Greidanus and producer Laura Davis asked me to help with picture cars I thought this was just another task, something to add to my Production Coordinator 'To Do' list. I learned quickly that it was a full time job.

"I was lucky because Tjardus did the research in the months prior to the start of production. He went to car shows and browsed Craigslist. By the time the job was handed to me, he had a collection of photos along with detailed notes. My job was to execute his vision. Given my inexperience, I ran into a few roadblocks.

#### <u>Challenge #1:</u> Convertibles

"We shot in October and November in cold, rainy weather. Did you know that classic car owners put their prized vehicles in storage for the winter? This was news to me. First I had to get the cars out of storage, and then I had to convince

the owners to drive their prized vehicles in inclement weather. To make matters worse, we shot mostly at night. I discovered that finding cars wasn't difficult; it was getting them to report to set at 1:00AM and stay until dawn.

#### Challenge #2: Budget

"With nearly no budget, I had to embrace my inner saleswoman. 'How would you like to have your car prominently featured in a gangster movie? How much are we paying? Oh it's not about the money, it's about the experience!' I complimented original upholstery and raved about body paint jobs. I worked overtime to get the job done. Plus, I had an advantage: there aren't many female Picture Car Coordinators. What 60-year-old retired Marine can turn down a request from someone who looks like his daughter? (True story.)

#### Challenge #3: Maintaining My Sanity

"I had two cars break down - one en route to set, and one *on* set. Another day I had a car delivered with 4 flat tires. You know the expression 'time is money'? If a crew has to wait for an essential vehicle – such as a garbage truck – you have to pay them to wait. The pressure was intense but I always had a back-up.

"The truth is I met wonderful people and I learned how to do a job I didn't know existed. I'm proud of the work I did; I believe I took good care of my guests – both automotive and human – on set. Now every time I pass a classic car cruise I smile, and take a few mental notes. You never know when I'll need them again."



Cait Murray with Ed Pfeil, one of our generous car owners

#### **CAST**

SPIDER TAMARA BIG DIDI CASKET MIKE

RAZ BOBO EDDY TY

SPIDER'S MOM

SLEDGE STUMPY FRANCO TOMMY

STOMPER #1 STOMPER #2 STOMPER #3 GARBAGE MAN #1

GARBAGE MAN #1
GARBAGE MAN #2

DOCTOR

MOBSTER #1 MOBSTER #2 MOBSTER #3 MOBSTER #4 MOBSTER #5 MOBSTER #6 BARTENDER POLICEMAN #1 POLICEMAN #2

CORONER MEDIC #1 MEDIC #2 REPORTER ESCHER HOLLOWAY RACHEL BROSNAHAN

JACK DONNER
ERIC ROBERTS
TODD JULIAN
RANE JAMESON
BARRET HACKNEY
AMADEO FUSCA
ELIZA ROBERTS
JEFF HOCHENDONER

ADAM KROLOFF
JARROD DIGIORGI
ROBERT CATRINI
ADAM HAGENBUCH

DEAN JACOBS DAVID MORENO TOMMY LAFITTE PHILLIP RUSH ANDREW BLOCH DANNY RIOS

KRISTOPHER VEENIS
CHRISTOPHER MELE
GINO DINARDO JR.
CLIFFORD LYNCH
TONY SLOMKOSKI
STEPHEN TAYLOR
KENNETH SOLOMON

ED PFEIL

WILLIAM BALESTINO STUART SETCAVAGE DAVID SANTIAGO BOB FERENCE