

## 1:30 pm FRI 3/18/05: QUESTIONS FOR HOLLYWOOD REPORTER:

### What are some of the major productions that have shot in New Orleans recently?

1. "Ray"—Oscar-winning performance by **Jamie** Foxx, Directed by Taylor Hackford
2. "Glory Road"—with Josh Lucas
3. "Just My Luck"—with Lindsay Lohan
4. "Dukes of Hazzard"—with Jessica Simpson, Burt Reynolds and Johnny Knoxville
5. "Skeleton Key"— with Kate Hudson
6. Kevin Williamson's "Backwater"
7. "Elvis"—CBS TV film
8. "Faith of My Fathers: The John McCain Story"
9. "Last Holiday"—with Queen Latifah
10. "Because of Winn-Dixie"
11. "A Love Song For Bobby Long"—with John Travolta
12. "Mr. 3000"— with Bernie **Mac**
13. Numerous low-budget independent films from "Pool House Prophets" to Indigent Films' "Flakes"
14. For Television: numerous MOW's, international documentaries, **reality show** episodes, music videos

### What's shooting there currently?

"All The King's Men"— with **Sean** Penn, Jude Law, Kate Winslet, Patricia Clarkson (whose mother serves on our City Council), James Gandolfini **and** Mark Ruffalo.

Publicist: Larry Kaplan 504-628-2054

### Productions Upcoming?

- "Failure to Launch"— Ron Bozman, Producer: 504-484-0412.
- FX is set to shoot 6 episodes of "Thief" in the fall.
- "Big **Momma's** House 2"—Edith LeBlanc, Production Supervisor: 504-733-1508.
- Locally-based LIFT Productions produced a dozen independent features (distributed by such mini-majors as **Lions** Gate) and television movies (appearing on such outlets as CBS and Lifetime) in 2004 and has \$100 million in production slated for 2005.
- GWave Productions, which has produced a series of MOW's including "Stuck in the Suburbs," "Pop Rocks," and "Searching for David's Heart," is currently in pre-production with "Campus Confidential."
- And numerous other features are currently scouting locations for future production.

## **Louisiana offers attractive economic incentives. Does New Orleans throw in anything extra?**

Mayor C. Ray Nagin has an Entertainment Industry background: he is the former Vice President and General Manager of Cox Cable New Orleans. He has taken the lead in promoting local workforce development and building infrastructure capacity. The Administration established a National Advisory Board to consult with the Mayor on building “Hollywood South.” Mayor Nagin has identified the “Creative Industries” as a focus of his economic agenda.

“We are proud of our role as the new Hollywood South,” Mayor Nagin said. “With incredible film incentives, millions in investment, Oscar-winning movies like ‘Ray,’ and an ever-expanding industry infrastructure, New Orleans has emerged as a major film production center.”

## **An extra-friendly film commission?**

Overall, our city service fees are among the lowest in the nation and we do everything possible to keep the process simple. Drawing on my 20+ years of experience as a Location Scout/Manager, **I strive to streamline the production process as Director of the Mayor’s Film Commission**, working closely with the many city agencies involved. The New Orleans Film Commission fully supports and has been actively involved in the implementation of the practical production aspects required to support the Louisiana State Incentive Program. We work closely with the Governor’s Office of Film and Television Development. Together, we are in the process of expanding the range of our services and look forward to a proactive future with upcoming productions.

## **What do you have to offer in terms of production facilities (soundstages, rental houses, post-production, etc.)?**

The Nims Center, 20 minutes from downtown New Orleans (504-430-8965) provides: a 100,000 square foot production facility, 30,000 square foot sound stage space, 30 production offices, High Definition post-production and screening rooms, fiber optics connectivity, Pro-tools icon console, Dolby audio suite, ADR and Foley recording studios, motion capture, animation, lock-up, hair and make-up and conference rooms.

Other film infrastructure continues to develop. Sound stages previously used in years past have been greatly upgraded. More warehouses and facilities are being converted for new Sound Stage usage while additional film support services continue to expand. For example, Panavision New Orleans will soon open a 12,000 square foot rental and service facility offering Panavision 35mm and digital camera systems and expendables. The office will also offer Arri 35mm and 16mm, Moviemcam 35mm, and a Super Technocrane. Additionally, TFN

Lighting will offer lighting, grip, trucks, generators, Fisher dollies and expendables from the same site.

### **Do you have experienced crews available?**

We have an excellent, ever-expanding crew base. Essentially, there has been non-stop feature, television, commercial, music video and series production here dating back to “Angel Heart” in 1985. Since the Louisiana State Tax Incentive Program was initiated in July 2002, crew has grown exponentially to meet increased needs for personnel—including the return of numerous skilled personnel who moved elsewhere to broaden their experience. Additionally, film industry professionals from outside Louisiana are relocating here. Our local crew base continues to grow as top quality filmmaking professionals move here to satisfy the demand for their skills. There were challenges in meeting crew needs in the past, but we are meeting those challenges now and continually expanding our training programs.

**Mayor Nagin** strongly emphasizes training and education—particularly **for** local workforce development. Numerous training and mentoring programs exist to develop young craftspeople in various filmmaking skills. With the increased demands, the industry itself is driving local filmmaking. Our office is working with educational institutions at all levels to create new and industry-current training programs.

### **We all know about the French Quarter. What other locations does New Orleans have to offer?**

Everyone knows about the French Quarter and the beauty of our Greek Revival city beyond the French Quarter. However, we are equally able to double New Orleans as other cities and locales. For instance, “Mr. 3000” used New Orleans for Milwaukee. “Ray” used locations here to double for **New York**, Georgia, California, and numerous other American cities, both rural and urban. For the Coen Brothers 1989 “Miller’s Crossing,” we recreated a Depression-era Northeastern industrial city. The “Dukes of Hazzard” 2<sup>nd</sup> unit car chase used New Orleans for Georgia.

Additionally, we have neighborhoods full of **1920s to 1950s** bungalows; Post-War era “looks”; Queen Anne and Victorian mansions; modern skyscrapers and suburbs; and rows of cottages straight out of a Walker Evans photograph. Numerous other architectural styles common to “Heartland America” are amply represented in complete neighborhoods. New Orleans’ sun-dappled boulevards speak equally for Southern Regional as well as Anywhere USA. Within the city limits we have rural farm and small town “looks.” Our extraordinary architecture is nestled among beautiful parks and tree-lined thoroughfares. A great moss-laden, cypress swamp is just **five** minutes from our international airport.

### **What is the weather like year-round?**

Temperatures rarely dip below freezing in the winter or reach 100 degrees during the summer. Our year round average temperature is a 68° Fahrenheit and we average 250 days a year of sunshine. “Ray” shot for over 2 months without using a day of rain cover.

### **What reasons have filmmakers given you for choosing New Orleans?**

The Louisiana State Tax incentive program is certainly a primary magnet. The City component provides diverse locations and looks that are evocative and beautiful for New Orleans-set projects as well as versatile looks for locations set elsewhere in the USA, Caribbean, Europe and even Asia.

New Orleans has always been a location destination. Now companies are discovering new ways that we can double for almost any state in the United States and some foreign countries. Now we are a growing film base with an ever-expanding crew of experienced craft and production personnel and ever-upgraded sound stage capacity.

Production Designers and Art Departments love New Orleans: our antique stores are abundant and **teeming with treasures from** all eras. It is often said that Magazine **Street** is one big “prop house.”

Then there is the intangible: Historic and hip, elegant and funky, New Orleans offers an environment that inspires the creative soul and spirit of artists in all fields.

### **Do you know of any directors, producers or location managers who might want to talk to us about why they chose your city?**

- “**Ray**” Producer Stewart Benjamin: 213-760-9575; office 310-453-9277.
- “Dukes of Hazzard” Producer Richard Prince: 310-466-7412. Publicist John Pisani email: [jmpmovie@aol.com](mailto:jmpmovie@aol.com).
- “All The King’s Men” Producer Michael Houseman c/o Lary Kaplan: 504-628-2054
- “Failure to Launch” Producer Ron Bozman: 504-484-0412
- “Glory Road”—Charlie Nelson/Walt Disney Pictures Publicity: (818) 560-1103
- “Just My Luck” Publicist Liz Biber: 310-721-9989

### **What's the single best thing about shooting a film or TV project in New Orleans? What makes it special?**

Fabulous diversity of locations ... and, of course, the food and music! Our first class restaurants, music clubs and the general charm of the unique lifestyle and

culture here make the filmmaking experience completely enjoyable. There is something wonderful to do every night after they call “Wrap.”