

Sundance 2005 Dramatic Competition Selection

POLICE BEAT

Written by Charles Mudede

Directed and written by Robinson Devor

Produced by Jeffrey M. Brown and Alexis Ferris

www.policebeatmovie.com

Sundance Screenings:

Sun. Jan 23, 2:30 pm, Racquet Club

Sun. Jan 23, 8:00 pm, Yarrow (Press & Industry only)

Mon. Jan 24, 11:59 pm, Egyptian

Tue. Jan 25, 6:00 pm, Broadway 4 (Salt Lake City)

Thu. Jan 27, 09:15 am, Eccles

Fri. Jan 28, 8:30, pm Racquet Club

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Production Notes – Robinson Devor

Police Beat was conceived in one of the blacker moments of trying to get Super Power, Charles and my first script, financed and into production. This was proving impossible, especially with the African locations, so Charles and I started thinking about a smaller project we could do in our own backyard of Seattle. We thought to ourselves, what kind of material do we have available to us? Given that Charles had been writing a weekly column about local crime for several years, we decided to see if we could use public domain police reports as the basis for a film. I especially wanted to capture the tone of his articles - the poetry, the humor, the philosophizing. It was such a refreshing take on crime, seen through African eyes, something 180 degrees from the crudity of Cops or the hardboiled eloquence of James Ellroy. Tonally, this was the opportunity to do something about crime that hadn't been done on film before.

As for the protagonist, Z, the man around whom the crimes swirl, his conception evolved over many months. Initially he was American, then Zimbabwean. Finally, when we settled on Pape as our lead, he became West African and Muslim. Pape's own personal beliefs were ideally suited for the lead. All along we wanted someone who was a decent morally upright man who was dealing with personal heartbreak. Spending a great deal of time with Pape throughout pre and production - almost three months - we slowly converted the character into someone that was very close to Pape. He was always consulted as to what he would do himself in a certain situation, and scenes were explained to him in a way that he could say his lines the way he would naturally. English was his second language, so we welcomed the beauty of fractured language. We then conceived of the idea that we felt would truly reflect the immigrant experience in a strange country - hearing him speak his new language, English, in dialogue, while also hearing what he was thinking in his native language, Wolof, via subtitles. This interplay of two languages appealed to us greatly. The film is really a lyrical poem, a strange emotional journey of a man reflected in the crime he encounters.

Synopsis

Co-written by Robinson Devor and Seattle critic and journalist Charles Mudede (whose weekly writings include The Stranger's crime blotter column, "Police Beat") and produced by Seattle locals Jeffrey Brown and Alexis Ferris, POLICE BEAT presents a unique protagonist in the post-9/11 world: a morally upright, Republican Muslim police officer. The film follows African-born Seattle bicycle cop ("Z") on his beat for seven days and six nights, covering crimes, all of which are based on actual Seattle police reports, in its 80-minute running time. Starring as Z is Pape S. Niang, a non-actor who was formerly a member of the Senegalese Junior Olympic soccer team.

POLICE BEAT is a highly unconventional crime film in which the protagonist Z is so preoccupied with his possibly unfaithful girlfriend that he never once acknowledges criminal world that swirls around him. The crimes Z encounters become mirrors of his turbulent inner state, allowing him to philosophize about his unstable romantic

relationship as well as his own development as an emotional being. While Z's regular interactions are in English, his thoughts _ the film's narration _ are in his native Wolof, the primary language of West Africa. In this way, POLICE BEAT is an unusual portrait of an immigrant new to the United States that focuses less on the protagonist's socio-economic difficulties than on his emotional responses to American life.

Bios

Robinson Devor -- Writer/Director

Named one of Variety's "10 Directors To Watch" in 2000, Robinson Devor made his feature film directorial debut with "The Woman Chaser", which was named one of the "Ten Best Films of the Year" by the San Francisco Chronicle. The only US film selected to play at The New York Film Festival, Sundance, and South by Southwest in the same year, "The Woman Chaser" received critical high marks throughout its 2000 US theatrical run ("Wicked and Brilliant", The New Yorker; "This year's 'Rushmore'", The NY Post). When it was released on video, MovieMaker magazine called it a "masterpiece" and named it the "Video Release of 2000". The film received its broadcast premiere on the Sundance Channel and the Showtime Network.

A 2002 Fellow at the Sundance Institute, Devor collaborated with African-born journalist Charles Mudede (arts editor/columnist, "The Stranger", Seattle) on the feature script, "Super Power", the story of an African child soldier attempting to recapture his childhood after a civil war. The script was developed at the Sundance Screenwriters Lab last summer and is being produced by Andrew Hurwitz, executive producer of "The Anniversary Party".

Before writing and directing "The Woman Chaser", Devor directed the acclaimed documentary, "Angelyne", about the eponymous LA billboard queen. It aired several times on PBS, and was called "a knockout" by the Village Voice. Though just thirty minutes long and shot in 16 mm. the film has been a top seller and rental at Virgin, 20/20, Tower Video and other major video chains over the past few years.

As a screenwriter, Devor has written several feature length screenplays beyond his adaptation of the novel, "The Woman Chaser". Among his efforts include "Black Lava", a collaboration with playwright Richard Ohanesian set against the modernist architectural backdrop of Palm Springs; "Golden", a look at the actual romance between a young serial killer and a middle-aged English journalist in the Deep South, circa 1975; "Crooner", a roman-a-clef about the Rat Pack in 1962 Las Vegas; and a modern update of Ernest Hemingway's big-game drama, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber".

A native New Yorker now living in both Los Angeles and Seattle, Devor received his BFA in Film from Southern Methodist University (Dallas, Texas). He has lived and worked in Africa (for Africa's largest indigenous banking network), co-curated an art exhibition with UCLA of Sub-Saharan contemporary artists, and worked as a counselor

for the Suicide Prevention Center at the Didi Hirsch Mental Health Hospital in Los Angeles.

Charles Mudede - Writer

Originally from Zimbabwe, Charles Tonderai Mudede is the Associate Editor for The Stranger, an alternative Seattle weekly. A film critic, book critic, and music critic, Mudede is also the author of The Stranger's popular column, "Police Beat". An adjunct professor at Pacific Lutheran University, Mudede's work has appeared in The Village Voice, The New York Times, C Theory, Radical Urban Theory, Arts Electronica, and Nest Magazine, among others. Mudede also is a founding member of the Seattle Research Institute (www.seattleresearchinstitute.org) and co-author with Diana George of "Last Seen," a book published by the Artspeak Gallery in Vancouver, B.C.

Jeffrey M. Brown -- Producer

Jeffrey Brown is a freelance producer and graphic designer with a degree in Film Studies and Theater Production from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. Jeffrey has worked in film and video for 8 years producing work for many clients and organizations in the Pacific Northwest, as well as directing local music videos. As a founding member of the SOS Film Festival, Jeffrey has also been programming film since 2001. Jeffrey is currently working on projects in and around the Northwest.

Alexis Ferris -- Producer

A producer of numerous short films, Alexis recently worked as Producer for the 2002 Northwest Film Forum's Start-to-Finish film, "Buffalo Bill's Defunct." She also owns and manages a successful photography business, and is currently at work on a portrait book depicting male and female archetypes.

Before moving to Seattle and beginning her producing career, Alexis was the Program Coordinator for The Committee on Jobs, a San Francisco business lobbying organization that represented thirty five of the city's largest companies. In addition to managing all business and lobbying activities, she administered annual budgets upwards of \$550,000.

Michael Seiwerath / Northwest Film Forum -- Executive Producer

Michael Seiwerath is Executive Director of Northwest Film Forum, a Seattle based non-profit film arts organization operating the city's cinematheque and WigglyWorld Studios, its film production entity. NWFF is gaining nationwide recognition as a useful resource for up-and-coming film artists, Seattle's most essential source for workshops, filmmaking grants and access to production and post-production equipment. POLICE BEAT is the fifth recipient of NWFF's ambitious and innovative Start-to-Finish grant. This grant annually supports one feature film from script development and fundraising, through production and into distribution, throwing the entire resources of the organization

behind it. Seiwerrath has served as a juror and panelist for the Slamdance Film Festival, National Endowment for the Arts and Creative Capital.

Sean Kirby -- Director of Photography

Sean Kirby graduated in 1993 from Syracuse University's School of Visual and Performing Arts with a degree in painting. After supporting himself through painting and photography he decided to return to school to study filmmaking. He received a full scholarship to The New York Film Academy where he learned to combine his artistic understanding of light with the techniques and equipment used for motion pictures. As a member of I.A.T.S.E. Local 481, New England, Sean worked as both a gaffer and electric on many independent features, studio productions, commercials and corporate films and videos. Concurrently, he began shooting short films and spec spots. His first credit as a director of photography, "Fidelis," won an award for best short at the 1998 Hampton Film Festival. His successive projects have also received awards and honorable mentions at domestic festivals such as The Boston Film Festival, Los Angeles International Shorts, the New York Film Festival and the Santa Fe Film Festival. Sean's most recent film, "The Gits Movie," a documentary about the self-titled Seattle punk band, is currently in post-production, was recently featured in Entertainment Weekly and has been approached by Showtime for distribution. Sean currently lives in Seattle.

Pape S. Niang -- Lead Actor

Starring as Z is Pape S. Niang, a non-actor who was formerly a member of the Senegalese Junior World Cup Soccer Team. After months of searching for a lead actor for POLICEBEAT, producer Alexis Ferris found Niang playing an impromptu game of soccer in a Seattle neighborhood. The moment she spoke to him, she knew they'd found their leading man. Niang, 21, moved to the United States from Senegal two years ago and is now living in England pursuing a professional soccer career.