

CHRISTIAN CINEMA INTERVIEW

Husband and Wife Team from "In the Blink of an Eye"

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Husband and wife David A.R. and Andrea Logan White have been in some films together, but other than the comedy Holyman Undercover, they haven't played lead roles opposite each other until their new thriller In the Blink of an Eye. The producers took advantage of the pair's natural chemistry with each other and cast them as husband and wife. I talked with David and Andrea the other morning about their new film, working together, and the baby they're expecting next year around the end of February.

It must be exciting for y'all.

David: It is, and we found out we're expecting a baby girl.

I watched the film a couple of weeks ago. It's an interesting combination of "Groundhog Day" and The Moment After.

David: Totally. It started out as Byron Jones' concept. Then we hired a screenwriter by the name of John Macy to take a crack at it.

Byron and I joined in afterward in the rewriting process so we could structure it the way we needed it.

Byron had this idea for a long time to do something like a Groundhog Day movie because it would allow us to really spell out the Gospel as the guy keeps failing over and over again. We really liked that angle to present the Gospel in a way that was fresh and different.

What are the challenges of doing a role like that? Your character goes through a big change in his arc, but it's within the same scenes. How did you take that on?

David: It's a little tricky because you can't just repeat the scene with the same emotions all over again. You really have to put yourself in that same situation and think, "if I had days that repeated over and over again, how would I handle them? In the process of handling something that's very déjà vu at the beginning, how would you respond?"

My character goes from thinking that he's experiencing déjà vu to realizing that something is definitely off. So I tried to think through the emotions and what it would be like to live the nightmare of losing family and friends over and over again and being powerless to stop it.

I thought from an actor's perspective, it was interesting, because I'd never done anything like that before. It was definitely fun to do that and try to see how I could adapt. It was also fun to come up with the scenes that ended each day, so to speak.

At the very end, I thought that it was true to life and faith because this very arrogant cop had to be humbled, and from the actor's perspective, it's a great arc to portray. He's very arrogant at the beginning and thinks he knows it all. He has these friends he thinks are crazy who constantly witness to him, and at the end, he's broken and on his knees.

That's where all of us need to be, on our knees and saying, "Lord, what do I have to do?" And the whole thing is that we can't do anything, it only happens through Christ.

This is the first feature out on DVD that you and Andrea have had leading roles in together. How was it working together?

David: Right. We teamed up in Holyman Undercover, but this is the first drama we've done together. It's a very delicate experience.

It's a wonderful thing to be able to work with my wife and to experience this whole thing together.

We went to Mexico to shoot and were in crazy situations with the ocean, and you can't control it.

When we were shooting in the ocean, you can't always see it, but some of the waves behind the windows are enormous. There were a lot of dangerous situations we went through together; some people almost died making this film.

We also had a guy on the crew go missing for a day in Mexico and were pulled over by cops who were trying to shake us down. There were all these heightened situations that, if she weren't with me, it would be hard to share those experiences with her. If you're not there, it can be hard to grasp those experiences. So on the one hand, it's wonderful that we got to share it together and our boy got to be on the set the whole time. As a family, it was a wonderful bonding experience.

Obviously, I enjoy performing with my wife.

There's something cool and easy about it. On the other side, it was also a challenge because we were concerned about the needs of our son, and I'm worried about making sure my wife is OK. So it was a tremendous amount of responsibility that went along with that. Whereas if she were in the States and I knew my boy was with her and well taken care of, it would seem a little easier. So there were lots of challenges and obstacles, but in the end, I'm thrilled to do it with her.

Andrea has co-producer credits on some of the PureFlix films. What are the strengths you each bring to film production that are also present in your marriage?

David: We're definitely different and have a different work process, which can be kind of a challenge. She's definitely much more meticulous than I am. She's more controlled and probably a better employee than myself. We complement each other on those things.

In this movie, really in any movie as an actor, you bring a lot of yourself to the screen, and in this movie, a lot of our relationship is brought to the screen. From the love to the bickering and bantering and the

cell phone scene, there's a lot of truth there that we deal with on an ongoing basis. A lot of couples deal with that, and that's why it's in the film.

When you are working together, what are some of the challenges of that? And what are the challenges of having your son on the set?

David: You're always trying to make sure he's not watching too much television and that someone is taking care of him. He was 2 ½ and wanted his mom when he wanted his mom. It was hard when she was working and he wanted her at that moment. On the flip side, a lot of the time he was actually very close to us so we were able to have a great time as a family. It was a good excursion.

This was also another opportunity to work with Eric Roberts, who is one of my favorite actors. What is it that brings him back to these independent Christian films? (He's also in Mercy Streets and Six: The Mark Unleashed)

David: I think he likes the positive messages of the movies.

Obviously, he does a lot of movies and a lot of dark movies. I think the reason why he did Mercy Streets and Six and this movie is that he likes the light. There's something that's attractive to him about these scripts and the positive messages that come from these scripts.

It's not just another action film or horror film or thriller, with people getting shot and drugs and things. Eric is from the South, and I think he has those values instilled in him.

He's great to work with him. He's such a pro, and I always enjoy working with him. He has such great life experience and has a million fascinating stories to tell.

It's fun to watch and listen to him. Because it's our third time around together, there's a certain camaraderie and respect that he gives us. He knows he'll look good when the movie comes out and he doesn't have to worry about that, which I think makes him more at ease and makes him enjoy it more.

It was also fun to see some familiar faces working together again. You see that in Hollywood films, and I enjoy seeing it in Christian productions as well.

David: When I was on Evening Shade with Burt Reynolds, every week he'd have his old buddies come in to work. There were people he'd worked with for 25 – 30 years plus. It was an interesting experience, because I was such a young kid at the time, to watch his camaraderie.

I didn't even know who Ozzie Davis or Elizabeth Ashley or Hal Holbrook or Terry Bradshaw or Dom DeLuise or Marilu Henner were. I didn't realize the connection Burt had to all of them. It's been fun since I was on that show to be caught up with Burt's movies, and in them, to find all these people he worked with throughout the years. That's one thing that stood out to me, was that I wanted to do that. I want to work my friends and I love that. I want to be able to work and not have those friends go anywhere, but be able to work with them for 15 – 20 years. We've done that a lot in our films, and it seems I don't ever do a movie where I don't know at least five of the actors and have long relationships with them.

Lonnie (Colon) was in The Moment

After 2, and Kass Connors and I were in an acting class about 15 years ago, and we've been in a couple of films together. I like that camaraderie.

You also worked on "To the Wall," again with some friends. (Kevin Downes and Stephen Baldwin) When is that coming out?

David: Kevin (Downes) can tell you that better than I can. I think maybe in the fall of next year? It doesn't have as much of a rush as some other things. It's a great film.

I think y'all are developing an interesting body of work in PureFlix.

If you were meeting with a potential investor, how would you describe the types of films you want to do?

David: Primarily faith and family films that try to be evangelistic as well. Not all of them are evangelistic. You can't say a certain genre because you have The Wager to Hidden Secrets to Sarah's Choice, which is a pro-life film definitely centered around the female audience, to In the Blink of an Eye. Those are all very different movies.

One element that I see in your films that I appreciate is that the evangelistic approach you take is more subtle and that you insert some moments of humor.

David: We definitely try to bring humor to them because so many things are so serious. And even with the more serious films, we try to bring a lightness to them. I'm a big of that because I love comedy, and when you get to see Holyman Undercover, that's a prime example of what's really deep inside of me.

When do we get to see "Holyman Undercover?"

David: It will come out January 12, in just a couple of months.

I think Andrea's feeling better, so let me get her on the phone.

David talked about working together. I'd like to get your perspective on it. What are your strengths to this partnership?

Andrea: The first, I think, is support. I think if I weren't married to an actor, I think it would be very hard to be married to someone who was. It's a 24-hour a day job, so I think the understanding and support I bring to what he does is valuable.

I also think I hold him accountable to what we do, making sure we pray about everything. We want everything we do to be a God-thing, not just a good idea and something we think is going to be neat. We want it to be led by the Spirit of God. That's my heart and priority is to first pray about each project.

It's a blessing to be able to work together.

I was 20 when I moved out to Los Angeles to pursue acting and I wasn't a Christian yet. It's so hard and so unfulfilling. When it's just about you, it's not very fun, so it's a blessing to be able to do things that glorify the Lord.

So I feel very safe producing and acting with David, and it's been a blessing to have his coverage and protection over me.

How did you become a Christian?

Andrea: When I moved out here, I fell in with the wrong crowd. It was very secular and worldly. I grew up going to church, but knowing about a relationship with the Lord. It was a very religious thing, but not relational.

I hit rock bottom. I was at the end of my rope, and had to deal with so much rejection. I was struggling to pay my rent and was working double shifts as a waitress, doing everything I could to stay in acting class. I was trying to do everything. My friends around me weren't the best crowd.

I was pretty broken, depressed, rejected and hurt, and my identity was in nothing other than achievement. So I felt like a failure. I told God, "If you're real, you need to show yourself," and sure enough He did.

How did you meet David?

Andrea: At the church where I got saved. When I met him, I thought he was such a genuine, caring, real person. You're not sure what people's motives in Los Angeles are, even the Christians, so I really loved his heart. He grew up in the church, his dad was a pastor, so I always remember him being really genuine and asking 100 questions.

He loves people and was asking me these details about my life. And I was like, "Who are you? What do you want to know?" But I remember how genuine he was, and didn't think he seemed like a typical actor. Once I got saved, I said, "I will never marry an actor," and that's the irony of God that I say that and then we married. But he's not your typical actor.

Y'all have done two movies together, where before you'd had parts in the same film, but not so strongly connected. Were there significant differences because of that?

Andrea: There are two sides to it. One is that it's easy because we have our real life to grab from. The other is that it's sometimes too close for comfort because we're both perfectionists and want to do everything right. It's a challenge also because we were more involved in the production than just acting.

I can tell when he's under more stress because it puts our relationship under more stress. But for the most part, it was fun because, like I said, I love that he brings a lightness on the set. He directed

Holyman, and I felt really comfortable with that. We also raised our son on the sets, and that's fun because it's not just David and I but our whole family.

It's a great thing to be able to bring everybody on board and not have to worry about people yelling at you. Being a mom is my priority, so it's a good thing to know that my son was taken care of and that David was looking out for him too.

With your second child, do you think you'll continue producing and acting together?

Andrea: That's our hope. When I'm pregnant, I usually take the entire year to a year and a half off to focus on that and relax, not stress about trying to memorize lines or do any of that. But we plan on jumping right back into it. We'll see how it goes, but I've always wanted to be able to work in film and still be a full-time mom.

Are there any types of films or scripts you'd like to see your production company do?

Andrea: We've talked about that a lot. I thought Sarah's Choice was an important film because it's pro-life, which is an important topic for women.

I went through major identity issues growing up and dealt with eating disorders, with the whole pressure of being a woman. I don't know what that looks like, but I'd like to create films that cater to women and address those types of issues. I feel like God allowed me to go through such a hard season of life to be able to somehow minister to others, so I'd like to tackle some of those issues for women.

I also really love comedies and lighter films. I like intense films, but I also like romantic comedies, things that make you laugh. I think as Christians, we need more feel-good movies that are clean and fun and enjoyable to watch with the whole family.

Amen. I keep wondering who will do the first Christian romantic comedy. There are so many great fun ones in the general market. Please let me know as soon as you start writing one! Finally, Andrea, you mentioned the difficult time you had coming out to Los Angeles. What kind of advice would you give someone who wants to come out here that you wish someone had given you?

Andrea: I would say to surround yourself with supportive, healthy, strong, positive people. There's something so true that you become who you hang around with, and I think it's so important to have that support system. For me, what really helped, was that once I started going to church again, God brought the right healthy people into my life and the others were pruned away.

Be around good strong positive people and then jump into acting classes, because that's the only way you exercise that muscle is by using it. I think the rest is in God's hands.

I think it's the hardest business to be in. You have to have a thick skin. Christian or not, you have to know that God's plan is perfect, and the rejection is so intense out here that I think you have to really understand that it's not your identity. There are so many false perceptions of what people think you

should do and be out here. So many of them are lies, opposite of what we Christians think and stand for. You also have to be very aware that this town is very deceptive.

And family is important. If you have brothers or sisters, someone you can lean on as you go through this, it's great too.