

FAMILY FILMS: One man's quest_110303

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A scene from the movie "Roy 'n' the Rev."
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FAMILY FILMS: One man's quest

By George Henson


Staff Writer

DALLAS-The dearth of family-friendly media programming has caused one North Texas layman to take the camera into his own hands.

"I quit going to movies. I quit watching television," Lee Douglas said. "I just tired of all the profanity, violence, sex and innuendo. I just think someone needs to make good family movies-not necessarily Christian, but family movies."

Douglas, who written, directed and produced training films for various corporations, recently sat that business aside to make his first feature-

length film, "Roy 'n' the Rev."


Humble Baptist Church in Hainesville and the Wood County Sheriff's Department both play key roles in the movie. Director Lee Douglas' goal is to make family-friendly films.

The movie features a con-man-turned-drug-dealer who is forced to play the role of pastor to drive a rural church to ruin so the property where the church sits can be reclaimed by the heirs. Pretending to be a pastor, however, leads the con man to become involved in the lives of the people in the tiny community, including coaching a Little League baseball team. He enlists Roy's help with the team, and their friendship blossoms. Along the way, his treatment by the townspeople causes him to question his previous way of life.

While the film is not overtly religious, a Baptist church plays a key part and subtle anti-drug and anti-abortion stances run throughout.

“None of these things are done in an in-your-face kind of way, but they are just presented as a part of the people's lives who are a part of the story,” Douglas explained.

Douglas, who at age 70 says he has changed jobs about every three years, patented a line of baking products in the early 1980s. Proceeds from that venture have bankrolled much of the independent film venture.

The movie took five and a half months to film, but that is because all the filming was done on weekends, he said. “All these people have other jobs, and the weekends were the only time they were available.”

Filming was done in the East Texas communities of Mineola, Alba, Winnsboro, Quitman, Hainesville and Emory. Many of the actors are residents of those communities.

The film's theatrical premiere was given at a private screening at the Angelika Film Center in Dallas.

Douglas is working now on distribution, trying to decide if the film will be shown in theaters or marketed for church and home viewing.



Gwyn Little
and Dot
Pelton
engage in a
little
beauty-shop
gossip in a
scene from
"Roy 'n' the
Rev."

The business side of film making is Douglas' least-favorite, he said, and he is anxious to start filming on one of the other four scripts he has waiting.

"I fully expect this one will make enough to pay for itself-paying all the people involved and taking care of all the production and post-production expenses," he said. "If I hadn't thought-I guess 'known' is better word-that it would make money, I probably wouldn't have done it. Maybe, but probably not."

Douglas said his research showed about 87 percent of all feature-length films are rated PG-13 or R.

"You read newspaper articles that say people are hungry for this sort of thing, that they are feeling beat down by all the violence, profanity and sex in most other films. I know there is a market for family-friendly entertainment."

His vision is to make "feature family films that are entertaining with a lot of humor, and that make a point along the way without being made to make a point."

Douglas wants to stay away from the Christian label because many people would stay away from the film for that reason and miss the good the film

has to offer. Some “Christian films” are so pronounced in delivering their message that it is never heard by those who need to hear it, he said.

“Contrast the 'Left Behind' movie to Andy Griffith,” Douglas offered. “He was such a good moral person it made you feel good. 'Left Behind' didn't do that.”

In “Roy 'n' the Rev,” Douglas filled just about every role possible except acting-writing, filming, directing, editing, site selection, casting. He intended to be an extra in a scene, but he got so caught up in the details it was over before he had the opportunity.

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