

Alums write and produce award-winning film



The love of movies that began for Chris Ford '93 (journalism) and Jason Newmark '94 (criminal justice) at the former Keystone Theatre resulted in making a film of their own.

Ford, writer and producer, and Newmark, co-producer and production coordinator, recently released their first movie, *The Village Barbershop*. Ford says they fell into the film industry because of the impact movies have had on them.

"My parents remember where they were when JFK was shot," Ford says. "I remember

Ashley Humphrey, Class of 2009 (English literature), is a student intern with Nevada Silver & Blue.

where I was when I first saw *Star Wars*—the Keystone Cinema, two-thirds of the way back—I'd just had three teeth pulled."

Ford was motivated to begin writing the screenplay after an encounter with a dreamer who talked about someday writing a script.

"That guy was a good 10 years older than me at the time and I said to myself, 'If I don't write something now, I'm going to be that guy in 10 years still talking about it,'" he says.

Newmark has been an amateur filmmaker since he was a child.

"I shot videos with my brother since I was little," Newmark says.

The Village Barbershop is about a "terminally irritable" man who is stuck in a Reno rut of haircuts and hot dogs, Ford says. After the death of his partner, a "spitfire young girl" enters his life and his shop. Together, the old man and the young girl find their way back to what is important.

Newmark didn't truly believe that a student from Reno could get a career in the film industry:

"I was always interested in studying film, but frankly, always thought it was a pipe dream," Newmark says.

Both Ford and Newmark delved into various fields during their student days at Nevada.

"I started off in engineering, moved to art, then ultimately journalism with an emphasis in advertising," Ford, who minored in art and English, says.

Newmark dabbled in business and journalism, but ended up with a criminal justice degree, all the while maintaining an interest in filmmaking. He learned public poise from one of his criminal justice professors.

"Matthew Leone taught me to have confidence in my writing abilities, and most importantly my presentation skills," Newmark says.

Ford's advertising professor, Bourne Morris, inspired him to realize his potential to contribute something unique to society.

"I was blown away by her experience,"



Images courtesy Chris Ford.

Gloria (Shelly Cole) and Art (John Ratzemberger) make an unlikely pair as Gloria takes a job in Art's "man's man" Reno barbershop, in *The Village Barbershop*.

Ford says. "It was her presence at Nevada that empowered me to think I could graduate from the ad program and go out and do something great."

Currently, *The Village Barbershop* is moving through the film festival circuit with hopes of gaining distribution.

"Just like colleges," Ford says, "the better festivals are hard to get into and have an overwhelming number of applicants. The best festival we've been accepted to was Cinequest, where it world-premiered."

The Cinequest Film Festival was recently named one of the top 10 festivals in the world by the *Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide*. *The Village Barbershop* received the Cinequest Audience Award for best feature film at the Silicon Valley festival.

The goal for having the movie run in film festivals is to generate enough positive reviews to sell the movie.

"Theatrical distribution is the holy grail of independent film making," Ford says.

The movie also appeared in the Sonoma Valley Film Festival in April, and has been accepted at the Newport Beach Film Festival and the Santa Cruz Film Festival.

For more information visit, www.thevillagebarbershop.com.