

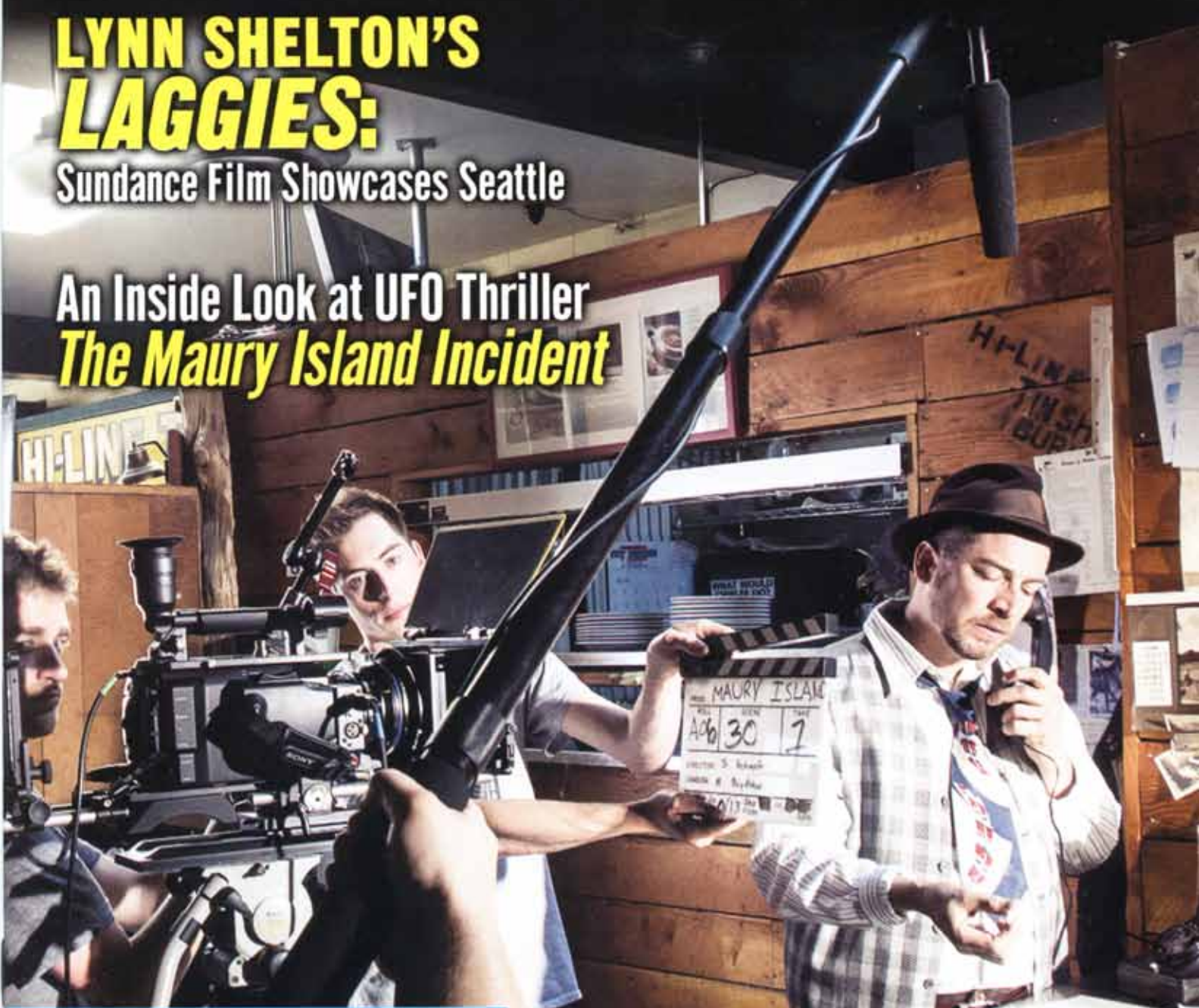
2014

Washington **FILM** MAGAZINE

LYNN SHELTON'S **LAGGIES:**

Sundance Film Showcases Seattle

An Inside Look at UFO Thriller
The Maury Island Incident



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INSIDE LOOK: THE MAURY ISLAND INCIDENT

FILMWORKS INNOVATION LAB PROJECT
EXPLORES 1947 UFO SIGHTING

BY SCOTT SCHAEFER Guest Columnist

When local filmmaker Steve Edmiston invited me to his outdoor party on June 21, 2012, to commemorate an historic, local UFO sighting, I jumped at the chance to attend.

Since I once worked as a field director on a UFO TV show called *Sightings* in the early '90s, I had a pretty deep interest and passion for these types of mysteries.

Plus, who can turn down a free outdoor party on the first day of summer?

And Steve was a good filmmaker (*The Day My Parents Became Cool*, *Crimes of the Past*) and lawyer, and his pitch on that sunny day was excellent and worthy of turning into a film, as I told him immediately afterwards.

"Do you realize that you just pitched a story for a great film that's never been produced?" I recall enthusiastically saying to Steve after he spoke.

We agreed to pursue *The Maury Island Incident* as a film project, and over the next several months put together a treatment. On December 5, 2012, we held a presentation at the Tin Room in Burien, where we pitched to and met our soon-to-be executive producer John White. We already had Danny House (Tin Room owner), and Laura Beth and Scott Peterson (of SAFE Boats) on board, but John invested the necessary remaining money to make this film a reality.

The short film, which was completed in December 2013, is based on the true story—taken directly from declassified FBI documents—of Harold Dahl's June 21, 1947, UFO sighting near Maury Island and the first reported 'Man In Black' encounter that happened the next day. An investigation followed that resulted in a mysterious crash of a B-25 carrying "slag" evidence from the encounter, which killed Army Air Force investigators Capt.

Still from *The Maury Island Incident*
Incident: MIKE BOYDSTUN



William Davidson and Lt. Frank Brown. This case went all the way up to FBI executive director J. Edgar Hoover, who expressed personal interest in it.

With a cast of outstanding Northwest actors cast by Stephen Salamunovich, and beautifully shot/edited by Mike Boydston along with a great Seattle indie crew in Burien, Des Moines, Tukwila and off the waters of Maury Island, I must admit that this was not only some of my best work, but also the most fun.

With a crew of 31 or so—recruited and assembled by line producer Elizabeth Heile—*The Maury Island Incident* was awarded an "Innovation Lab" award from Washington Filmworks in June. We are now entering film festivals with the hope of taking this short to the next level—either as a feature film or TV series.

One of the most important things we did was hire casting director Salamunovich, who auditioned over 80 of the best actors and actresses in the Northwest, gave recommendations, and helped us put together an amazing cast.

If you've ever worked on a movie set before, you know just how busy and crazy things can get, with crew members each doing their jobs like efficient worker ants, always striving to get things ready for the next shot as soon as possible. There's a director (me, in my first attempt at shooting a film despite 28-plus years of directing/writing TV) who's working with actors, as well as with a director of photography (Boydston, who I've known since we both worked on *Almost Live!* at KING-TV in the late 1980s), discussing each shot and preparing, all the while managed by an assistant director (Laura Jean Cronin). The AD is making sure things are running on time, that equipment is set and ready, then at the right moment shouting, "Quiet! Roll audio! Roll camera!" This allows me to say, "And... Action!" and for everyone to just shut the heck up and get the shot.

Then we all do another take "just for insurance," or perhaps to "hold for sound" because airplanes (or buses, loud cars, people, etc.) went by, or a dozen other reasons

why we want to try it again... all as our AD is asking if we're ready to move on yet. Whew! This was the most intense production experience I've had since 1992, when I had the opportunity to direct Arsenio Hall in a comedy sketch on the New York street backlot at Paramount Pictures in Hollywood. (Mr. Hall would only do one take, and was accompanied by a large, burly entourage driving tiny golf carts!)

After editing was finalized and we had "picture lock," we turned it over to local musician David Templeton, who created an amazing original score for the film. I was happy with the product with temp music, but once we heard David's magical score, everyone realized that it was taken to a much higher level. Wow!

"The most exciting parts of the story to me are the true things that actually happened, all without having to decide if the UFOs were real: the first reported man in black, J. Edgar Hoover's personal involvement, the Army's investigation, the fatal B-25 crash over Kelso, and the fact that the facts were hidden in classified FBI documents," said Steve Edmiston. "To me, the real story here is what happens to a man who tells the world an amazing tale that no one believes and the government wants to bury."

What a pleasure it's been to be a part of this project, from those first few magical "aha!" moments at Steve's outdoor party, to watching test screenings of the final version with our great crew.

Everyone involved wants to return to another version



Crew films scenes from the Innovation labs-winning short.
MICHAEL BRUNK / NWLENS.COM



of this project, which we know will rise above what we did in this first round. We can't wait! **WF**

For more information, visit www.mauryislandincident.com and www.facebook.com/MauryIslandIncident.

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