

CITY LIFE

Kevin Hooks makes directorial debut in *Strictly Business*

by David Thomas

HOLLYWOOD, CA—Most television viewers know Kevin Hooks from his work on the popular television series *The White Shadow*. But at 33, Kevin is already an industry veteran having acted in a host of films since his childhood including the landmark movie, *Sounder*. Kevin has quickly become one of the fastest rising TV/film directors on the scene today. The Warner Brothers comedy, *Strictly Business*, marks the latest chapter in his illustrious career.

Kevin credits his father with being a significant influence in his success and development.

"My father (actor, Robert Hooks) is mainly responsible for me being in this business today," he said. "I was nine when I first became involved in the business, and he is certainly the reason I decided that acting was something that I wanted to pursue. Growing up around him, acting felt very natural, and I felt confident that I could do it. I've been involved with film in one way or another for most of my life."

Being known primarily for his role in *The White Shadow*, Hooks said he does manage to keep in touch with some of his old castmates, as their careers have taken turns similar to his.

"I keep in touch with a number of the guys, but primarily with Thomas Carter because we have so much in common now in terms of the direction of both of our careers. He is directing and producing now as well. In fact, his office is not very far from mine. We see each other a lot and exchange ideas and philosophies. Another person I keep in touch with is my dear friend, Eric Kilpatrick who played Curtis Jackson on the show. He and I have been friends ever since we were kids. So, I basically keep in touch with the two of them."

He, Eric Laineville of *St. Elsewhere*, and Jackson all decided to take advantage of the opportunities in directing and learned it in a very unique manner.

Hooks explained that while they were doing their own shows, they

would use their days off to watch different directors work.

"We'd talk with cameramen, look through the camera, and ride

the dolly as a shot was developing. We'd also see how things were put together in the editing room. So, we kind of created our own film school

in the three years that we were doing *The White Shadow*," Hooks said.

Hooks explained that even though he feels his craft is directing, he prefers working on feature films rather than television. He said that feature films allow him more of a chance to explore than television.

"In television, you simply don't have the time or budget to create and explore the kinds of things that I would like," he said. "TV movies are generally filmed in an average of 18-22 days which is not a lot of time. The challenges of television are interesting because you don't have the time or the advantage of using the latest technology to bring certain images to the screen. Whereas, with film there is more time and you have the opportunity to at least explore some of the newer technologies."

With his re-nascented notoriety, he says it's tough to find time for his wife and three children but they all make the effort to be together when they can.

"It's always a delicate balance in this industry between your dedi-

cation to your craft and your private life," he said.

"There's an old saying here that when you're working all the time, you complain that you don't have enough time off. On the other hand, when you do get time off, then two weeks later you're complaining that you've got to get back to work. I've been able to work out a good balance so far," he said.

He said that in a lot of instances, his family visits him on the set and he tries to do things with his children. Hooks said that his children understand what he does and realize that he cannot make it to everyone of their special events.

"It's a juggling act, but it makes things easier when you have the cooperation and understanding of everyone involved," Hooks said.

Following the recent release of *Strictly Business*, Hooks will be working this month on *Passenger 57*, an action adventure film starring Wesley Snipes, and in mid-92, he is scheduled to begin filming *Heatwave II* starring Blair Underwood and Cicely Tyson.



Kevin Hooks, gesturing director Fede D'Alvi (C) and castmembers in *Strictly Business*.