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Section: Scene

'Jupiter Landing' in Salt Lake

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Who knows what the future holds for Stacy Dymalski? She has worked as a comedian, taught and performed improv, written numerous screenplays and plans to add film director and producer to her list of achievements. On Aug. 2, 2004, Dymalski will start filming "**Jupiter Landing**" in Salt Lake. Although it may sound like a Sci-Fi flick, it is actually a dark comedy about **Jupiter Landing**, an old Victorian house converted into apartments, and the seven tenants that live there.

The tenants, however, do not get along. When the landlord decides to turn the house into commercial space, each of the tenants is evicted. Despite their dislike for one another, the seven join in a fight to save their homes.

Five years ago the screenplay for "**Jupiter Landing**" was in the works. It was started by Zack Van Eyck, a staff writer for the Deseret Morning News and then passed on to Dymalski to finish. As she explains, "The thing we've kind of told people is that he makes the skeleton and I make the muscles and put the skin on it."

Dymalski and Van Eyck met several years ago at the Telluride IndieFest. Dymalski's "A Cure For Suicide" won for best original screenplay at the competition.

Impressed with her work, Van Eyck, a resident of Salt Lake, suggested the two start a writers group. Although the group eventually fizzled, the two continued to collaborate on scripts. When the two finished "**Jupiter Landing**," it was entered into the RedInks Screenplay Competition in Canada where it took first place.

As a result of this accolade, several entertainment trades picked up the story. Numerous directors and producers wanted the screenplay and a bidding war ensued. Finally, director and producer David Winkler, known for his film "Finding Graceland" starring Harvey Keitel and Bridget Fonda, won the "war" for a one-year option.

When the option expired, Winkler said he would be happy to purchase another option, but it would only expire the next year. Instead, he suggested Dymalski and Van Eyck make the film and he would act as mentor.

After some thought, Dymalski decided to take on the role of director and co-producer. She says, "The first thing I had to do was bring people on board that I trust."

Dymalski called on her improv comedy buddies from Off the Top for help. John Spung, a businessman and comedian, was among those enlisted.

According to Dymalski, "His job was to set up the movie as an entity. We put together a prospectus and the idea was for John to market to investors."

Then Jim and Billie Harsch were added to the list, two people "instrumental in getting the movie funded. Jim, having taken several companies public knew where to look for investors." Most of the funds have been provided by family, friends and business acquaintances. Harsch currently offers four levels of investment opportunities to raise the total monies needed.

"We're confident from the interest we have had that we will get the money," says Harsch. "The movie will get done one way or the other."

Interestingly, Dymalski, worried about whether or not enough funds would be available to start filming, applied to the 2005 January Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab. Between 2,000 and 3,000 applications are submitted each year.

From those, 400 scripts are selected to move to the second round of the application process. Twelve will then be chosen for the program. "**Jupiter Landing**" was among the 400. However, Dymalski had to withdraw "**Jupiter Landing**" from the competition because her team was able to pull together enough funds to make "**Jupiter Landing**" without Sundance's help.

According to Dymalski, "I actually had to call up Sundance and say thank you, but we'll make the movie ourselves. They said 'that doesn't happen very often,' but they were very supportive and said they look forward to seeing it.

Dymalski's goal is to have "**Jupiter Landing**" play the festival circuit and eventually be picked up by a distributor. The film should be finished and ready in time for submission to the 2005/2006 festival circuit.

With the help of the Utah Film Commission, seven principles were cast, five from Salt Lake, along with nine day-players. The home being used as **Jupiter Landing** is located on First Ave. in Salt Lake City. It is the same house used in the film "Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers."

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