



THE DAY Eazy-E DIED

SOUTHERN FRIED FILMWORKS PRESENTS

The Day Eazy-E Died

screenplay by

JAMES EARL HARDY

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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SOUTHERN FRIED FILMWORKS
PRODUCING
"THE DAY EAZY-E DIED"
WITH SCREENPLAY WRITTEN BY
B-BOY BLUES SERIES AUTHOR
JAMES EARL HARDY

New York, New York -- September 2009 -- **Southern Fried Filmworks** is pleased to announce it has optioned the rights to produce the feature film version of *The Day Eazy-E Died*. The film will be produced by **Trevite Willis** of **Southern Fried Filmworks** from the original script by best-selling author **James Earl Hardy**, and directed by emerging film director **Kirk Shannon-Butts** (Blueprint, Complete Abandon).

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FILMWORKS

James Earl Hardy has created memorable characters in this youthful drama set in 1990s New York City. Principal photography is scheduled to begin April of 2010 in New York City coinciding with the 15th anniversary of the passing of rap pioneer Eazy-E, founder and original member of the group N.W.A.

The film is the story of **Kwame Woodson**, a 24 year old Harlemit. After one of his idols, rap artist **Eazy-E**, discloses that he is dying from complications from AIDS, Kwame realizes he can no longer ignore the disease and decides to get tested for the HIV virus – but doesn't tell his girlfriend, **Queen McMillian**.

As Kwame waits for the results, his world is turned inside out with his dead end job at a record shop, his relationship with his daughter, his budding rap career, trying to reunite his older brother and father, and his love life all seem to squeeze him.

About Southern Fried Filmworks

Southern Fried Filmworks is a full service multimedia production company committed to acquiring, developing, and creating independent movies, television series and special-interest projects. Southern Fried works with home-grown and international writers and directors committed to their craft and to relating courageous, beyond the ordinary stories in their unique vision.



About Producer Trevite Willis

Trevite Willis holds an MBA in International Business and has been continuously engaged in the production of motion pictures since 1999. She has produced music videos, short and feature films including the romantic comedy ***What a Man Wouldn't Do for a Woman***, and the African-American gay coming-of-age ***Blueprint***, which enjoyed success at festivals such as the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, OutFest, NewFest, Frameline as well as others around the world. The 2008 Columbia University short film, ***Uncle Killa*** she produced earned the director a **DGA Best Student Film**

– **African American** award. Also ***Uncle Killa*** was selected as an HBO finalist at the **American Black Film Festival**, and picked up by HBO, which began airing February 2009. Currently, the Bahamian drama, ***Children of God***, based on the award-winning

short film *Float*, has been selected as the opening night film at the **Bahamas International Film Festival**. Her music video productions have included works with Grammy nominees and winners including **Shawn Mullins** and **Speech of Arrested Development**.

"With the 15th Anniversary of Eazy-E's death next March, *The Day Eazy-E Died* can bring AIDS and the HIV virus to the forefront of the Black diaspora since Blacks are the highest growing sector of new HIV cases today. James Earl Hardy has created a wonderful story, and I look forward to re-teaming with Kirk to create a film that will resonate with audiences not to ignore the disease."

About Screenwriter James Earl Hardy

James Earl Hardy is the author of the best selling B-Boy Blues series: *B-Boy Blues* (1994), praised as the first gay hip-hop love story and prominently featured in Spike Lee's *Get On The Bus*; it's sequel, *2nd Time Around* (1996); *If Only For One Nite* (1997); *The Day Eazy-E Died* (2001); *Love the One You're With* (2002); and *A House Is Not A Home* (2005). The sextet chronicle the relationship between a Buppie from Brooklyn and a homeboy-bike messenger from Harlem. **Mr. Hardy** recently contributed the new introductory essay to the ground-breaking Black gay male anthology, *In The Life* (2008).



In addition, Mr. Hardy is an award-winning entertainment feature writer and cultural critic. A **1993 honors graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism**, his byline has appeared in **The Advocate, Entertainment Weekly, Essence, New York Newsday, Newsweek, OUT, The Source, Upscale, Vibe, The Village Voice, and The Washington Post**. His work has earned him two **Educational Press Association Awards**; Grants from the **E.Y. Harburg Foundation** and the **American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors**; and scholarships from the **Paul Rapoport Memorial Fund**, and the New York and National chapters of the **Association of Black Journalists**. A recent online essay, *Sylvester: Living Proof*, was a GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) Media Award finalist. He has also penned biographies on filmmaker **Spike Lee** and the pop music group **Boyz II Men**, both a part of **Chelsea House publishers' Black Achievement Series**.

Born and raised in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, New York, he divides his

time between Atlanta, Georgia, and Gramercy Park in Manhattan.

"Given the horrific HIV infection rates and the conspiracy of silence surrounding AIDS in Black America, this project is very necessary. There are few films told from our perspective [on this issue], and even fewer that tackle the homophobia that divides families and prevents the kind of collective action needed to battle the disease."



About Director Kirk Shannon-Butts

Fashionista (Glamour, Vogue, Rolling Stone) by day and filmmaker every other second of the day, **Kirk Shannon-Butts**, Filmmaker, is a native of Baltimore, Maryland. In 2000 Kirk graduated from Chapman University's Cecil B. DeMille's School of Film & Television with a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree in Film & Television Production.

For his first film, Shannon-Butts delivered the stunningly beautiful black and white film ***Beneath the Surface***, full of images of Black men channeling the B-Boy, the Homo Thug, the Handsome Man and the Shaved Head Muscle Guy. A blend of modern urban fantasy and erotica, ***Beneath the Surface*** is based on the Greek myth of Narcissus. ***Complete Abandon***, Shannon-Butts' graduate thesis film, premiered at the Jamerican Film Festival and went on to screen at Cannes, The Kennedy Center, The New Festival in film festivals throughout the world. ***Complete Abandon*** was one of twelve American short films selected to represent Pan African existence in the Diaspora .

In 2004 Shannon-Butts received a Jerome Foundation grant and the Plant-a-Seed Award from 1-in-10 / Reel Affirmations for emerging filmmakers for his first feature length screenplay ***Blueprint***. ***Blueprint*** was shot over 10 days in New York City and Upstate New York.

A good story can warm our hearts, soothe our souls, or open our minds to a new way of thinking. Stories help us to understand the world around us through articulating common experiences and sharing joy, laughter and healing. Sometimes a good story allows us to feel connected to humanity, and some leave us with an unforgettable experience that we will remember for the rest of our lives.

Cast, production schedules and locations will be announced soon.

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Producer **Trevite Willis**, Director **Kirk Shannon-Butts**, and screenwriter **James Earl Hardy** are available for interview by appointment.

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