



Kids, don't try this at home: "Boxboarders."

Film showcases stupid guy tricks

BY CATEY SULLIVAN | CONTRIBUTOR

What Christopher Guest did for community theater in the brilliant mockumentary "Waiting for Guffman," Evanston producers George and Elizabeth Elder hope to for the urban sport of boxboarding in "Boxboarders."

First thing you need to know: Don't boxboard. It's dangerous. It involves duct taping wheels to a refrigerator box, climbing in and blindly catapulting your boxed-in self down steep thoroughfares at speeds upward of 50 miles an hour.

All of the actual boxboarding in "Boxboarders" is done by a trained professional who is known in Hollywood for doing stuff like propelling himself off 60-foot drops on a skateboard and living to tell the tale.

Second thing: Although there are lots of nubile teenagers in "Boxboarders" and the movie's director is the same guy who directed "Friday the 13th Part 10:

Freddy Takes Manhattan," none of the teens gets slashed to death right after having sex. This is more or less a family movie.

As family-friendly as you can get with a character like The Lizardman -- a guy who's had his tongue permanently bifurcated and his head surgically reconstructed and tattooed green so he looks reptilian.

"Boxboarders" is Elder's first full-fledged feature film, although his company, Luminair, has been producing television and movie segments for clients ranging from the Morton Downey Jr. Show to CNBC to the Home Shopping Network to Warner Bros. ("Batman Begins") to Miramax ("Derailed") for close to 30 years.

The Elders decided to tackle "Boxboarders" when director and scriptwriter Rob Hedden, a long-time family friend based in Laguna Beach, mentioned the project after a memorial service for George's sister, Sissy Anne Elder.

"We hadn't seen each other for a long time. It was wonderful that my sister brought us back together again," Elder said.

Stranger than fiction

For Hedden, "Boxboarders" started several years ago, when he looked out of his kitchen window to see a giant box hurtling down a hill in his backyard.

"It was the weirdest thing. It was flying down the hill, it crashed into a tree and then my two sons came crawling out of the top, kind of moaning but also laughing. That was when I noticed they'd duct-taped their skateboards to the bottom of the box.

"It struck me as a classic, ridiculously stupid thing that boys do when they're growing up," Hedden said.

"We have a disclaimer at the start of the movie," he emphasized, "It says 'Don't do this sport. It's stupid.' "

To tackle the really stupid boxboarding segments, he brought in veteran stuntman Tom Mason, a world champion street luger if you overlook the fact that he was stripped of his X-Games gold medals for "rough riding."

"I didn't know you couldn't knock people out of your way when I started. So I lost the medals, but Red Bull loved me," he said. (Mason's toured the world with Red Bull-sponsored luge events.)

No peeking

The fact that boxboarding doesn't allow for peripheral vision like street lugging didn't faze Mason.

"When directors need somebody to set on fire and dive under a truck, they call me," he said. "I'm not afraid."

Even so, there were some moments that probably scared others in the course of making "Boxboarders."

"We secured the locations as well as you can, but still we had a lot of near misses with cars and trucks. Every once in a while, a car would come up while I was doing 50 or so and I'd see some old lady staring like what the hell," Mason said.

Having raised \$500,000 to get "Boxboarders," made, the Elders are now looking for a distributor.

"Getting a theatrical release is our number one goal right now," Elder said. "We're in the process of lining up producers' reps to set up screenings for various studios."

"Some people describe the movie as 'Jackass Meets Napoleon Dynamite,' but that's not quite right," Hedden added. " 'Boxboarders' has a plot and characters. 'Jackass' doesn't."

For more information about "Boxboarders," log on to <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0473153/combined> or www.lumenair.com
<http://www.luminair.com>.

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