

Press Photos
**UNCSA alum-
 nus Edward
 Varine is gear-
 ing up to direct
 his first full-
 length film,
 "Law of the
 Land"**



UNCSA ALUM SET TO FILM DEBUT FEATURE IN WINSTON

BY LAYLA GARMS
 THE CHRONICLE

Just over a year after completing his degree, UNC School of the Arts alumnus Edward Varine is returning to Winston-Salem for the first major project of his professional career.

Varine, a native of Anaheim, Calif., and his crew are slated to spend 19 days next month in and around downtown Winston-Salem filming "The Law of the Land," Varine's first feature length film.

Billed as a crime thriller, "Law of the Land" has been a labor of love for the 28-year-old, whose passion for film-making dates back to his days of watching Bruce Lee films as a preteen. The project began as a short film Varine penned for a sophomore thesis project several years ago. The film explores the internal conflict experienced by a professional hitman, Ash Jones, who begins to question the morality of his profession after falling in love.

"He let somebody get close and then all of a sudden, the code that he lives by gets called into question," explained Varine, the second of three children. ".... Ultimately, we see him make some decisions that are definitely going to affect the rest of his life."

Kwame Patterson, of HBO's "The Wire" fame, has already signed on as the film's principal actor. Varine contacted Patterson via social media about 18 months ago and says he was encouraged by the veteran actor's positive response.

"I sent him the script and he loved it - he's been with it since day one," Varine said of Patterson, who currently appears on the Showtime drama "Ray Donovan." "We've been very fortunate to have an established actor ... to openly commit to the project."

Producer Gabrielle Lui, a 2013 UNCSC alumna, met with Patterson during a visit to Los Angeles last year and said she is thrilled about the prospect of working with him.

"I am so excited that he is part of the project," she declared. "Kwame seems very down to earth and very well suited for this role."

The film serves as a commentary on the war on drugs and fulfills a long-held desire to cast an African American in a leading role in a hitman film, Varine said.

"The war on drugs influences everybody," commented the Charlotte resident. "Every character is a representation of what the War on Drugs does to our community."

The crew, which includes a host of UNCSC grads, is operating on what Varine calls a "super duper micro"



Actor Kwame Patterson has signed on to star.

budget. "The only budget is love, passion, creativity and support from my partners," he said. "But what we really do have a lot of is just really being passionate, believing in the project. 'We're in this together,' that's kind of our motto."

Varine credits UNCSC - and the many mentors he has there - with giving him the knowledge and the courage to chase his dreams as a filmmaker.

"The school's a special place," he said. "I like to call it the dream factory because it's all about getting your dreams out to the highest level possible."

The Oval Office, a barber shop on Fourth Street, will serve as the "hub" for Ash's criminal activity in the film. The crew is currently working to secure other filming sites and seeking a local retailer to donate clothes for the cast that would be showcased in the film, said Lui, who has been involved with the project for over two years.

Like many independent films, "Law of the Land" has grappled with its share of challenges, the largest of which is securing funding to make the film. Production was postponed from May to August because of fund-

ing concerns, and the crew is still actively working to secure funds to cover production costs through a variety of channels, including a campaign promoting the film on the fundraising site indiegogo.com, Lui explained.

"We've been trying to reach out to as many people as we can," stated the Jackson, Tenn. native. "...We need more money - that is always the hardest part."

Despite the setbacks, Varine is optimistic about the film's progress.

"You're working with people who believe in the project," he said. "Of course you have those moments when you don't know how you're going to get from (point) A to Z, but you do know you're going to get to Z, and that's all that matters."

Lui, who already has several producing or co-producing credits to her name, also has high hopes for "Law."

"It'd be great if we could get it in a top tier film festival like Sundance or Toronto or South by Southwest," she said. "We'd love to get into one of those festivals and get onto Netflix. We'd be beyond excited if we got that."

Wherever the film takes him, "Law" has been an important and rewarding step in his

career, Varine said.

"The bottom line is for somebody to believe in you as a storyteller and that you can bring it all together - that's the most encouraging part," he commented. "Really, it's just about a group of people believing in one another. That's the bottom line."

Varine says he can't wait for cameras to start rolling next month.

"With each and every moment of every day, we're getting closer to making it happen, so I feel really good about it," he declared. "We're ready to get started."

Donations to "Law of the Land" can be made at www.indiegogo.com/projects/law-of-the-land-through-friday-july-12. For more information about donating clothes, food and/or other products and services, email lawofthelandfilms@gmail.com.

Public input sought as Sheriff's Department seeks accreditation

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

A team of assessors from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) will be in town from July 13-16 to examine all aspects of the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office policy and procedures, management, operations and support services for reaccreditation, according to Sheriff William T. "Bill" Schatzman.

The assessment team consists of the Chief Deputy Brad Slater from Cache County Sheriff's Office in Utah and Chief of Police Wayne Isbell of the Mount Pleasant Police Department in Mount Pleasant, Texas.

As part of the on-site assessment, agency personnel and members of the community are invited to offer comments at a public information session on July 15 from 6 - 8 p.m. The session will be conducted in the Sgt. James M. Johnson Memorial Training Room of the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office, 120 W. Third St.



Sheriff Schatzman

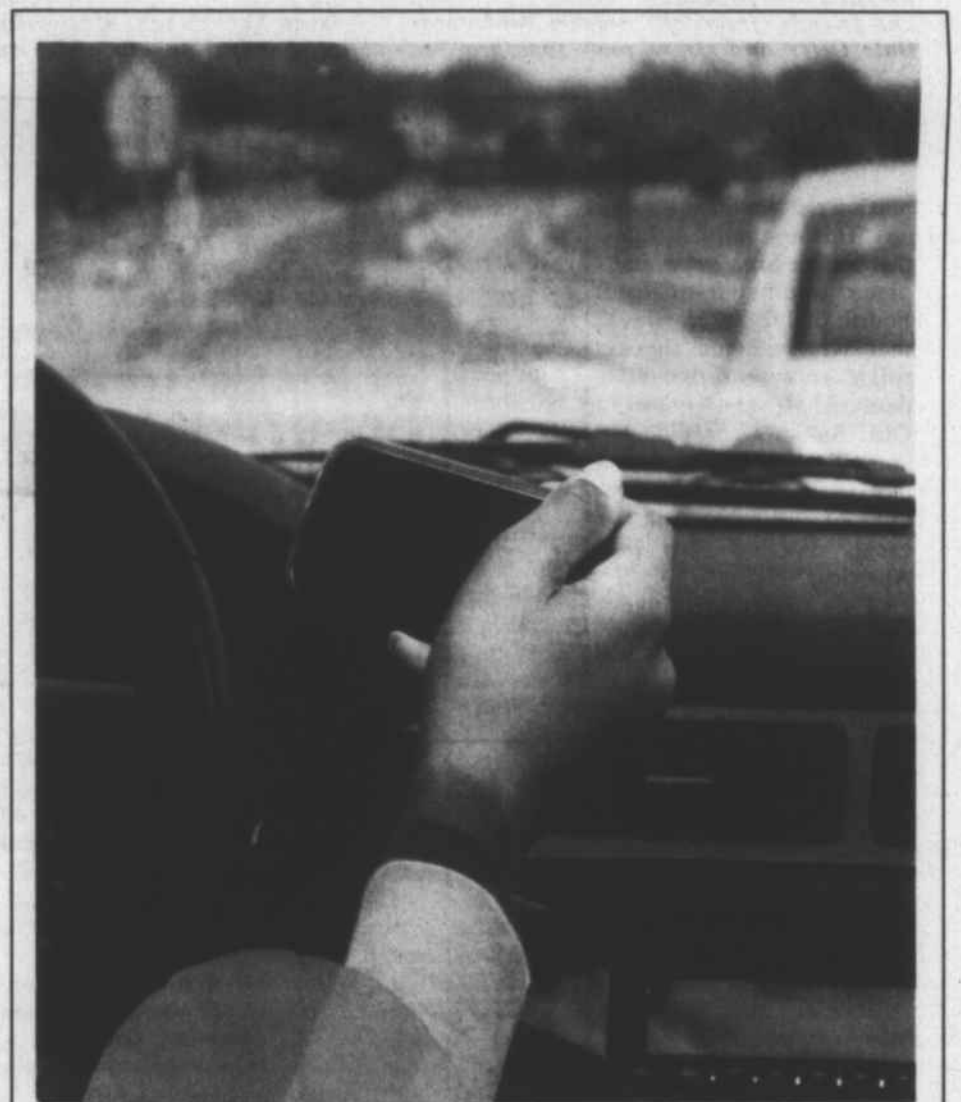
If for some reason an individual cannot speak at the public information session but would still like to provide comments to the assessment team, he or she may do so by telephone on July 15 from 1 - 3 p.m. The public may call the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office at 336-917-7315 to speak to the assessors.

Telephone comments, as well as appearances at the public information session, are limited to 10 minutes and must address the agency's ability to comply with CALEA Standards. A copy of the standards is available at the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office or from the Sheriff's Accreditation Specialist Lewis Wayne Moore at 336-917-7405. Persons wishing to offer written comments about the ability of the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office to meet the standards for accreditation are requested to write to the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA), 13575 Heathcote Boulevard, Suite 320, Gainesville, Virginia 20155-6660.

Sheriff Schatzman states the assessment team is responsible for verifying that the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office meets the Commission's state-of-the-art standards as part of the voluntary process for CALEA reaccreditation - a highly prized recognition of public safety professional excellence.



Lui



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