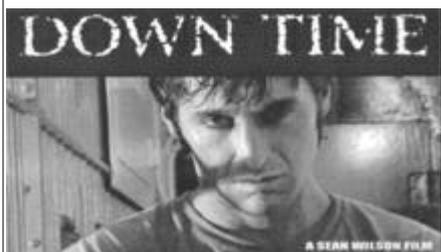


Montara's Own William Van Nolan

by Leah Lubin



It was the type of day you dream about during winter. At Alice's Restaurant at Four Corners in SkyLonda the waitress had lowered the bamboo blinds to keep out the sun and there was no waiting for one of their booth tables. I was there to meet William Van Nolan, an actor from Montara who was featured in the lead role in a film called Downtime, which was doing a film festival circuit.

Two days earlier, I had reviewed the film and read material about Van Nolan. I was pleased to see that a "local" was presenting himself so professionally in the film industry. Downtime, his latest movie role, was intense to say the least. A prison film about the hidden world, culture, and lifestyle of incarceration. Realistic, powerful, and thought-provoking are all good words to describe this film. Definitely not for everyone, probably not for most. But, if it's your cup of tea, then you'd probably enjoy it very much.

I reviewed the questions that I had created to ask him at Alice's. Believing that with this interview, the question and answer method would produce the best results. So, between sips of coffee and bites of waffle, I asked William the following questions:

Leah Lubin: How long have you lived in Montara and how did you get to this area?

William Van Nolan: I have lived along the coast all of my life. Born in San Francisco, with a brief stint in Menlo Park, I've been in Montara most of my life.

L.L. How did you first decide you wanted to be an actor, and what happened next?

W.V.N. It started in second grade, but when I went to college at Skyline Community College I started with impersonations, and continued with every small opportunity in acting I could get. I've even done Greek tragedies.

L.L. How has your career developed?

W.V.N. Right after my divorce, I was feeling free to return to my roots and took training with Jean Shelton and others. With small movie roles in between, my major experience was with Downtime.

L.L. Five years from now, how do you see your work?

W.V.N. I want to be in the thick of it. I want to be making a living as an actor, and if possible, get a chance to do other roles than the "bad guy" type. I am interested in spreading my wings and trying as many roles as possible.

L.L. Slim, your character in Downtime, was a career criminal and was addicted to heroin. Was he hard to play?

W.V.N. At first, yes. We shot at three prison locations, Alcatraz, Alameda County Lock-up, and Sam Quinton. It was all quite intense for me.

L.L. What kind of film would you like to do next?

W.V.N. Something I haven't done, like a film with two characters in it where I can play two characters at the same time. I want to work on a good story, no matter what.

L.L. What kind of experiences did you have with your film director and fellow actors?

W.V.N. To put it in a nutshell, it was like the good, the bad, and the ugly. I was surrounded by a very good and talented cast.

L.L. What is it like selling yourself as an actor? What are your markets?

W.V.N. The markets remain to be seen. Work has to speak for itself. I like the challenge that it's hard, but I'm willing to go as far as I need to go.

L.L. What is your most treasured possession?

W.V.N. My wristwatch, because it has incredible sentimental attachment. Received as a gift from the love of my life three years ago.

L.L. What is your greatest regret, if any?

W.V.N. I have none.

L.L. What human traits do you most admire?

W.V.N. Loyalty and passion. My father raised me with a shovel in one hand and a book in the other. In 1963, my father believed in the need for a bomb shelter due to the "Bay of Pigs" incident. Cuba was pointing missiles, and my dad believed his large family should be ready. So, we built a bomb shelter. It taught me the meaning of hard work.

L.L. For all our local budding actors, what can you say to inspire them?

W.V.N. You have to love this business to have even a chance to succeed. If you have the passion and the drive, "no" only means "not now."

Thank you William. Keep up the good acting!