

YOUR ORGANIZATION AND "HONEYDRIPPER"

THIS BETTER BE
SOME SATURDAY
NIGHT!

DANNY GLOVER
CHARLES S. DUTTON
LISA GAY HAMILTON

A FILM BY JOHN SAYLES

HONEYDRIPPER

ANARCHISTS' CONVENTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH EMERGING PICTURES AND RAINFOREST FILMS PRESENTS "HONEYDRIPPER"
ERIC ABRAAMS GARY CLARK JR. YAYA DACKOSTA CHARLES S. DUTTON DARYL EDWARDS DANNY GLOVER ALBERT HALL VONDIÉ CURTIS HALL LISA GAY HAMILTON BRENT JENNINGS DR. MABLE JOHN STACY KEACH DAVENIA MCFADDEN
KEEL MITCHELL KEVIN AMY RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON EDWIE SHAW MARY STEENBURGEN SEAN PATRICK THOMAS ARTHUR LEE WILLIAMS TOM WRIGHT CASTING BY JOHN HUBBARD MUSIC COMPOSED BY MASON DARING COSTUME DESIGNER HOPE HANAFIN
PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13
www.honeydripper-movie.com

<http://honeydripper-movie.com>

YOUR ORGANIZATION AND “HONEYDRIPPER”

A Win-Win Situation Through Outreach Efforts:

How Your Group/ Organization/ School Benefits By Getting The Word Out

“Honeydripper” is not only a thought provoking film, but is also a lot of fun, and can be the perfect vehicle for individuals and organizations to create events and/or raise money. Its appeal goes across several constituencies:

- Music fans, particularly fans of authentic blues and early rock n’ roll
- Music Appreciation groups or classes in secondary, university and continuing education settings
- Organizations that are devoted to the preservation of African American music traditions
- Organizations that are interested in African American history
- American history classes or historical societies
- Independent film fans
- Organizations that are interested in promoting the key messages of the film:
 - Hope under adverse circumstances
 - The entrepreneurial spirit
- Organizations that want to celebrate Martin Luther King Day and/or Black History Month
- Senior citizens who can relate to the era in which the film takes place

Whether lecturing on your agenda or educating a history class, you can utilize “Honeydripper” theatrical screenings not just for fundraising, but for consciousness-raising and community dialogue.

RAISE FUNDS AND/OR CONSCIOUSNESS WITH “HONEYDRIPPER”

Choose from any of the following programs:

ADOPT A THEATER

Pick the nearest theater in your town/community that’s playing “Honeydripper.” Be our marketing partner by helping get the word out through: 1) e-mail blasts to your constituency, 2) putting up banners in your website, 3) sending announcements out through your newsletter (e-mail and/or snail mail), 4) planting information in websites and blogs, 5) putting up posters and mini-posters in your office premises or campuses, 6) disseminating postcards and flyers. If you are able to show substantial proof of your support, Emerging Pictures will share **5% of the box office gross receipts** from your adopted theater with your organization. Contact us at promotions@emergingpictures.com and we will match you up with a local theater in your area. The earlier you sign up, the better job you will be able to do, and the more money you can earn for your organization.

BUY-OUT A SHOW

Special discounted tickets are available for groups of over 25 people. You can buy tickets in advance for your group at the discounted rates and either pass the savings along to your membership, or sell the tickets at a higher price to raise money for your organization. Even better, you can buy out an entire show and turn it into a big event that you can promote to the community. Other ideas include:

- Have a speaker lead a discussion after the show. This can be done at the theater (extra charges may apply), at a local restaurant or other venue such as your local library. The restaurant may be interested in giving you a special deal in return for the guaranteed business.
- Have a party afterward at someone’s house or at a local restaurant. Social events after the movie can sometimes justify a higher ticket price, and thus increase your fund raising capability.
- Tie-in with a local blues club and use a blues performance as your after-party.
- Sell posters or soundtrack CDs at the events to raise additional money.

Contact promotions@emergingpictures.com to see what dates might be available in your area, and to find out what your local theater would charge for group tickets.

PRE-RELEASE EVENT

In most parts of the country, “Honeydripper” will be released at the beginning of February. Prior to the release, there will be advance screenings to celebrate MLK Day and Black History Month, and to bring the film to the attention of local media and interested organizations. If you would like to host such a screening, it can be structured as a benefit, or simply as a premiere event. The costs of renting a theater for the night would have to come from the sponsoring organization. Many of the same ideas listed above could be used for an advance event. In addition, in some cases, the filmmakers and the cast of the film might be available to attend, but would require that their travel and accommodation expenses be taken care of. Also, it may be possible to bring in the musicians that perform in the film for a performance. To explore these possibilities and to determine exact costs, contact promotions@emergingpictures.com.

DISCOUNTED TICKETS FOR YOUR GROUP

If your organization has a newsletter, email list or other way of reaching out to large numbers of people, we may be willing to give you a discount for your members in return for use of your lists to promote the film. The local theater would be alerted to give the discount to anyone showing your group’s membership card. If you don’t have membership cards, we can make other arrangements. For details, contact promotions@emergingpictures.com.

BUY TICKETS FOR A LOCAL SCHOOL, CLUB OR SENIOR CENTER

Use the inspirational message of the film for educational purposes by donating a screening for a local school or club. Tickets can be heavily discounted for such purposes, especially when screenings are held during normal school hours and your donation may be tax-deductible. Special educational materials are available for classroom use, such as:

- Study Guides that explore the themes in the film
- Videotaped lectures about the marketing of the film that were held at Clark Atlanta University

Senior citizens already get discounts in most theaters. You can also donate a bus to get them to the theater.

For details, contact promotions@emergingpictures.com.

FOR ANY OF THE ABOVE PROGRAMS, WE WILL SUPPLY YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- Sample press release to alert local media about your event or program
- JPEG of “Honeydripper” art for use in flyers, email blasts, postcards etc
- Banner ads for use on your web site
- A study guide that can be duplicated for your use
- A list of sample discussion topics for after screening talks
- Promotion of your event on the “Honeydripper” web site

You can also buy copies of the soundtrack album and the poster at discounted rates for promotional use, or to sell at your event.

If you have other ideas about how your community can use Honeydripper please let us know at promotions@emergingpictures.com.



Tue., Sep. 11, 2007

Honeydripper

By [JOHN ANDERSON](#)

John Sayles the storyteller and John Sayles the political progressive haven't always played well together, but, in the endearing musical time-piece "Honeydripper," the indie icon lets his narrative gifts take the lead and the social issues follow like a tight bass line. The result is one of Sayles' best films. The music, a mix of blues, seminal rock and newcomer Gary Clark Jr.'s performance, will be an obvious draw, as will the performances by some leading African-American actors.

In '50s Alabama, the beleaguered Tyrone Purvis (Danny Glover) is deeply in debt and about to lose his roadhouse, the Honeydripper, when he gets a brainstorm: He'll book regional celebrity Guitar Sam to play the club, have the best Saturday night of his life and use the proceeds to pay off the landlord and the chicken man, and to get his nightclub out of hock.

The problem? Purvis doesn't have any money to book Guitar Sam, isn't sure where to find him, and doesn't know if he'd show up anyway. But Purvis steals a load of booze from the liquor man (a cameo by Sayles), and, despite the apprehensions of his buddy Maceo (Charles S. Dutton), starts putting up posters advertising Guitar Sam.

Everything is set up to build to a suspenseful Saturday night, which is effective because the population surrounding Purvis and the Honeydripper is such a well-cut cast of Southern characters. They include Tyrone's queenly house singer Bertha Mae (Dr. Mable John) and her consort Slick (Vondie Curtis Hall); the corpulent white sheriff Pugh (Stacey Keach), who keeps Purvis under constant duress; Purvis' beautiful stepdaughter China Doll (terrific newcomer Yaya DaCosta); and his wife Delilah (Lisa Gay Hamilton), who is having a struggle of the soul choosing between a charismatic church leader and her considerably less devout husband.

Into this mix comes the wandering Sonny Blake (Clark), an itinerant bluesman cut from the Robert Johnson legend, claiming to be as good a player as Guitar Sam and toting a guitar cut out of a solid block of wood. It's electric. No one's ever seen one -- which is no accident. The community around the Honeydripper is supposedly set in 1950s Alabama but it could be the '40s, '30s or '20s -- the point being that for Southern rural black America, not much changed for a long, long time.

Moviegoers may find politics if they want to in "Honeydripper," or they may just be drawn along by the story of a Saturday night when everything could go right or wrong. And no one's really sure until the end which way it's going to be.

Honeydripper
Patrick Z McGavin in Toronto
11 Oct 2007

Relaxed, confident and very percussive in texture and mood, John Sayles' musical fable *Honeydripper* is the director's strongest work since *Lone Star* (1996). The story of a juke joint proprietor taking whatever measures necessary to save his country roadhouse, the movie showcases the film-maker and novelist's affectionate and lyrical grasp of character, humour and dramatic detail.

Taking the model of David Lynch's *Inland Empire*, Sayles is self-distributing this, his 16th feature, in conjunction with Ira Deutchman's Emerging Pictures. Abetted by a marvelously detailed and intricate lead performance by Danny Glover, his best work since Charles Burnett's *To Sleep With Anger*, *Honeydripper* received a rapturous audience response at its Toronto world premiere. Powered by a strong cast that adroitly mixes established and unknown actors, excellent production values and a tangy bluegrass and rhythm and blues soundtrack, the movie holds strong niche appeal for urban markets and Southern communities.

Represented in international territories by Rezo Films, the movie plays in competition at San Sebastian. Internationally the movie's best prospects are likely in ancillary platforms, particularly DVD.

Since his debut, *The Return Of The Secaucus Seven*, Sayles' best work has focused on groups, examining the interlay of class, race, social values and political urgency. Set in the Jim Crow American south of Alabama in 1950, *Honeydripper's* plot is arranged anecdotally, a loose collection of stories, monologues, memories, linked by music and the vibrant collection of personalities. Not coincidentally Sayles' production company, Anarchists' Convention, is named for the title of his first collection of short stories, and several of the characters are imported from Sayles' recent fiction. The work appears flush with autobiographical implications of the difficulties and vicissitudes of the independent artist. The colourful and quixotic owner of the Honeydripper Lounge, Tyrone (Glover) is a proud and boastful man with a quick humour and tragic history.

He's a piano player whose juke joint struggles to stay afloat in the face of mounting debts, declining patronage and a more prosperous rival located across the street. Tyrone pulls out all the stops to save his club, hiring the near mythical electric playing virtuoso Guitar Sam to headline a one-night showstopper. His plan entails all manner of theatrical fakery, back dealing and subterfuge. Sayles collapses the primary story and develops conflict, character detail and emotional volatility through his novelistic accumulation of voices and expressive faces. These colourful, leisurely shaped vignettes allow for a thrilling and fluid characterization that perfectly balances humour, speech patterns and irony, like the train station employee who notes ruefully, "The only night I spent in a jail was in a town called Liberty."

Working in a milieu more dreamed about than fully recreated, Sayles gently upbraids the mythology and poetry of southern blues, riffing on the legend Robert Johnson, or the cultural transformation brought about by the electric guitar. Playing off the tradition of oral storytelling indigenous to American black southern culture, Sayles locates conflict through behaviour and personality, such as Tyrone's loyal lieutenant Maceo (Dutton), or his religiously inclined though patient wife (Hamilton) whose piety and demands her husband surrender his grandeur produce all manner of tension and unruliness between the couple. These sharp, telling moments imbue the work with a musical flow. Newcomer Yaya DaCosta delivers a lovely, sharp performance as the couple's teenage daughter.

If the portrait of racial politics, embodied by the rule of law imposed by the stern, crusty sheriff (Keach) is more fanciful than entirely believable, Sayles acknowledges the racial divide, seen in the character of the itinerant guitar player Sonny (Clark, Jr), in a manner that makes its point more through observation than argument. The movie ends on a triumphant note, but it is shrouded in grace and irony.

Dick Pope's cinematography is wonderfully understated in soaking up the local flavour and the score by Mason Daring is incandescent. It is consistent with a movie that swoops, soars and gets its groove on.

Down South, Singing the Indie Blues

By JOHN ANDERSON

WHAT she'd really like, said the film producer Maggie Renzi, is "a big check and a lot of help." So far, getting the help hasn't been a problem. The big check, however, may depend on how well she and her longtime companion, the director John Sayles, can counter all the changes in the independent film business, effect a few of their own and reinvigorate an audience that most movie distributors write off as AARP, if not R.I.P.

Twenty-seven years and 16 features after they began their mutual career with "Return of the Secaucus Seven" in 1980, Mr. Sayles and Ms. Renzi — still enthusiastic despite the demanding life of independent filmmakers — are prepping for the public consumption of "Honeydripper," which features a virtually all-black cast and is set around an Alabama juke joint (in about 1950) that Danny Glover's character tries to keep in business. While the movie takes place in the past, its marketing campaign involves a forward-looking synthesis of digital projection, colleges, blues bars, underserved movie houses and the Internet.

The entire approach is a grass-roots response to a cinema landscape that is attracting more and more filmmakers, crowded into an area that remains curiously static in one major way: Distributors' perpetual emphasis on youth can push proven quantities like Mr. Sayles, whose filmography includes "Matewan," "Eight Men Out," "Lone Star" and the Spanish-language "Men With Guns," to the sidelines. Still, Mr. Sayles and Ms. Renzi say their audiences are out there. "They just need to be invited back into the theaters," Ms. Renzi said.

"My challenge to them," she said of the distributors, "is, 'Can you come up to the new mark?' Because the old mark isn't working anymore."

Independent cinema is often thought of as a young person's medium, by reason of low budgets, often naïve subject matter and an "alternative" cachet. But many of the better-known people working in it are no longer kids. They are, however, being forced to remain alternative. Gus van Sant's new "Paranoid Park" will be distributed by IFC First Take, through which films are available on pay-per-view cable the same day they are released theatrically. (Most theater owners refuse to show such movies, worried that television will cannibalize ticket sales.) Another indie veteran, David Lynch, is self-distributing, largely through his Web site.

"The good thing," Mr. Sayles said, "is it's a lot easier to make a movie than it is used to be. When we started, there was no high-def video, for instance. We made our movie and nobody had ever heard of that: 'You just made a movie? How can anyone just make a movie?' If your film simply had sprocket holes, the four companies that were not studios — there were four at the time — would come and look."

"Now," he continued, "Sundance gets 5,000 feature films every year, and there are 5,000 filmmakers from the last year who are still trying to make films. Every distributor in America could show a different movie every day for a year, and there are only so many screens that show non-Hollywood stuff, and only 52 weeks a year, so the mathematical equation is — there's a huge amount of competition."

Although they went to the Toronto International Film Festival in September ostensibly looking for a buyer, Mr. Sayles and Ms. Renzi's efforts seemed halfhearted at best: they were happy, Ms. Renzi said, with the marketing plan that was in place between them and Emerging Pictures, the Manhattan company

run by the distribution veteran Ira Deutchman, which has been using unorthodox methods to get specialized film to audiences.

In the case of “Honeydripper,” those things include taking musicians from the movie, a so-called Honeydripper All-Star Band, to a recent blues festival in Long Beach, Calif. “Was it worth it?” Ms. Renzi asked rhetorically. “I looked out at this crowd of maybe 600 people rocking out in 110-degree weather, and I thought, ‘Yes.’ Because we had asked every one of these people, who are blues fans, to go to the movie. And they’ll go.” Six hundred people may not be much by Hollywood standards, but the strategy is about talking to people who will talk to the right people.

William Packer, the producer of “Stomp the Yard,” has also joined the “Honeydripper” team, helping to forge an alliance with Clark Atlanta University, which, in conjunction with the film, is starting a marketing and distribution course for African-American college students nationwide.

“John Sayles has his audience,” a mostly white, older, art-house crowd, Mr. Packer said. “But I think this is a film I really think can penetrate the African-American audience.” He plans to reach them through churches and the school alliance, and by sharing profits with the colleges whose students are involved. “Honeydripper” stars Mr. Glover as the owner of a bar in financial trouble, who decides to book a regional blues star for the one big Saturday-night payday. Things go awry, in various comedic ways. Character, however, is the film’s calling card, as is the cast, which features veterans like Charles S. Dutton.

“I was definitely a fan,” Mr. Dutton said, explaining how he got involved with Mr. Sayles. “Always have been. Every time I would hear about a Sayles movie, I’d say, ‘Damn, I never get a call from this guy.’ And I’ve known Danny for 27, 28 years, and he and I have never worked together. So when this one came around, it was a chance to work with Sayles and Danny.”

Not, however, for the big check. “I guess you eventually get spoiled after a couple of decades in the business, and it took some getting used to,” Mr. Dutton said, referring to the low-budget Sayles operation. “Because they’re not the greatest trailers, and all that stuff. You go in those tiny cubicles and say, ‘Lord, what have I gotten myself into?’ But there’s a great camaraderie.”

Mr. Sayles may not be thrilled with the constant scrambling, but he has come to terms with it. “You get to the point,” he said, “where you say, ‘How much money do we have, and can we shoot it in five weeks?’ Rather than wait another year and see if we can raise money, we go ahead. You just have to learn to multitask. For instance, I wrote 10 pages of a screenplay for somebody yesterday morning, so I’m almost always, unless I’m shooting, writing something, which is how I make a living. And how I financed the last couple of films. But it’s just part of the job and always has been.

“About 80 percent of the job is publicity and fund-raising. It’s not my interest, but if you want to make another film, you have to deal with it.”