

STORY TAKES INDIE APPROACH

BY AMY HAGGAR

Richard Story has been a filmmaker since he picked up a black-and-white camera back in 1980. But when APTN put out a call for submissions to create a pilot for potential development into a series, he decided to make the leap to TV and created a script called *The Time Traveler*.

"*The Time Traveler* came out of an appreciation for all these HBO shows I've been watching and these long stories like *24*," says Story, whose previous credits include the feature films *Echo Lake* and *Some Letters to a Young Poet* as well as numerous shorts.

After developing the script, he pitched it to the network, which gave it the green light in September 2008. He then began casting and assembling a crew. The pilot was shot on the Red One camera over 20 days in Toronto, wrapping July 10. Writer/director/DOP Story produces alongside Sandra Edmunds and Kent Sobey, with Lorne Cardinal executive producing.

The story of *The Time Traveler* centers on a young girl (Elitsa Bako) from a Utopian society in the future who travels back in time to 2009 in order to save the human race, enlisting the help of a young aboriginal man (Meegwun Fairbrother).

Marrying an aboriginal theme to the genre of science fiction seems like an arduous task, however Story didn't find the union difficult. Creating something for APTN

was a natural fit for the filmmaker, who is of Coast Salish and Kanaka-Hawaiian decent. "Whatever I do it always ends up having an aboriginal theme, whether it's overt or in my subtext," says Story. "It's the sort of thing you can't stop."

As for sci-fi, the director has always been a fan. "I just find it fascinating, the idea that you can go into these imagined worlds. I think it's a liberating medium."

He is, however, quick to point out that the genre is not without its challenges. "It does have some constraints. We have basically set most of the story in Toronto 2009, partly for budgetary and logistical purposes."

Story approached the filming of this pilot in the same way he approaches feature films – with an independent mentality. "We're making this a different way," he says. "When I shoot a low-budget feature I shoot two-and-a-half pages a day. If I [went] onto any TV set here in Canada and I said I wanted to [do that], people [wouldn't] take that very seriously. But it's a very good way [to shoot] for independent features, so why can't you just apply that approach to television?" And that



Filmmaker Richard Story checks the shot for *The Time Traveler*

is exactly what he has done, allowing 20 shooting days for the one-hour \$400,000 pilot and finishing ahead of schedule.

Also in keeping with that independent spirit, Story has chosen to shoot most of the pilot on location, even using his own apartment in Toronto's Parkdale district for many scenes. He attributes his ability to do so to working with a small crew, most of whom he hired through Craigslist.

Story includes everyone in the creative process, relying on his crew and producers for not only technical but also creative ideas.

"That's another aboriginal theme, the idea of inclusion," says Story. "I'm the person that has the name on the front of it, but it's these people, our little group, that has made this."

The pilot is scheduled to air on APTN this fall. •

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