

## 'DELOVELY' AND ME

*Very Interesting Day On A Baltimore Movie Set*

By Bill Wurzell, Editor

I know Jerry Gordon and many other Chesapeake Region members past and present have had their antique cars used in motion pictures in and around the Baltimore/Washington area.

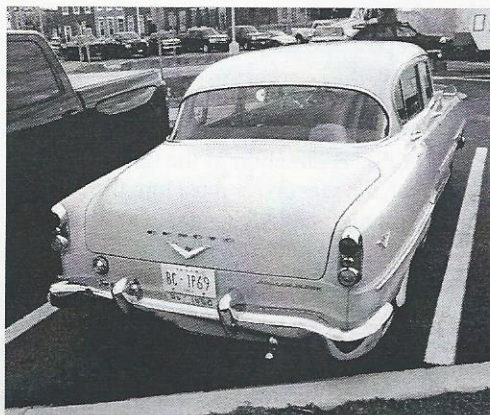
A group of movies made by Baltimore native and film Director Barry Levinson come to mind. Namely: *'Diner'*, *'Tin Men'*, *'Avalon'* and *'Liberty Heights.'* All were commercially successful and in the case of *'Diner'*, and *'Avalon'* critically acclaimed. A number of members of Chesapeake Region and other car clubs had their vehicles appear in those endearing films.

Recently, this same opportunity befell me and my 1954 DeSoto Firedome sedan. It all came about suddenly, within a period of about 10 days. It started with an email I received from a bright, pleasant young woman, Ms Marcy Rolin-Fox. Ms Fox apparently obtained my email address from another party that suggested she contact me. Her question to me was "do I own or know someone that has a 1962 or '63 Imperial (Chrysler Corporation) limousine in black?" Well, I'm sorry Marcy, but no, I don't know anyone with a vehicle like that. I also said, if there was an active one in the area, I would probably know about the car. In my email reply, I included a picture of my DeSoto. Ms Fox quickly responded that she really liked my car and inquired if I would be interested in bringing the car onto a local movie set for inclusion in the theatrical film being shot in and around Baltimore and Washington, DC? Duh? *Yeah!*

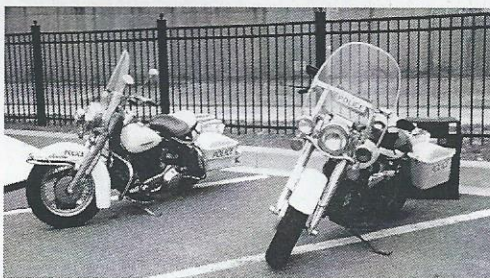
I didn't even ask what the movie was about, is it a made for TV movie, a theatrical movie, and who are the players?

All those questions and many more would be answered in the next few days. When I agreed, Ms Fox asked if I would prefer to drive my car or would I rather have a 'professional' staff member drive the car while filming a scene. I thought, maybe the car insurance might not cover someone else in case of an accident, so I replied that I'll be happy to drive the car. She said 'fine!' She then asked me to download a 'W9' form, complete it and email it to her; which I did. She told me she needed the form to get me paid the \$400 per day rate for me and the car. I'm thinking, 'hot damn' this is getting better and better; in a movie and getting paid to boot! I also received an insurance binder that the Production Company would cover the cost of liability insurance in the event of an accident. On Wednesday, February 24, I received an email to report to the set located at North Payson Street and Route 40, in Baltimore City.

This is the area of Route 40 that is split between East and West bound lanes separated by a wide median. The roadway features many overpasses held up by round concrete columns. I soon learned that this site was chosen as a 'stand in' for the famous 'triple underpass' near



*My DeSoto sporting 1963 Texas license plates.*



*Two very large male actors dressed as Dallas Motorcycle Policeman escorted the Presidential Limousine in the scene shot on February 25.*

Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas. Yep, this movie is about the JFK assassination, but more precisely about *JACKIE KENNEDY*. When I heard this I was quite surprised because I thought all story lines regarding 'Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy', ('Onassis', came later) had been explored. Apparently, they found another. The working title of this film is 'Jackie.' This title is subject to change by the time the film makes it into theaters by early 2017.

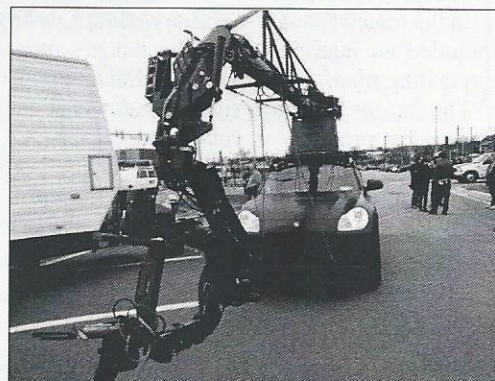
***The scene and the shoot...***

Ultimately, I was to report to the set at 10 am Thursday, February 25. I would be taken to 'wardrobe' and get fitted in appropriate togs. I was aware of this and gave a lot of thought to what I wore that day. Gray slacks, white Oxford cloth button down dress shirt with solid burgundy 'V' neck sweater, a blue windbreaker sans nomenclature. Wardrobe people looked me over and said "you're perfect as is!" (wish my ex would have thought like that) I digress.

Okay, I'm on the set with the DeSoto rarin' to go. I meet the other driver/owners including a very pleasant gentleman by the name of Steve Lichtman. Mr. Lichtman is a retired Maryland Paramedic who was stationed at BWI/Thurgood Marshall Airport. He is also a member of the Professional Vehicle Association and the owner of a 1970s era Cadillac ambulance. Steve also owns several other vehicles including a 1964 Studebaker Lark sedan, 289 c.i., with 'three-on-the-tree. This vehicle is going to be driven by a professional staff member; Steve decided to ride in my DeSoto. He later



*'Picture cars', 1961 Lincoln and 1956 Cadillac.*



*The production crew referred to the above Porsche Cayenne as the 'camera car.' It's painted a very dull flat black, to minimize reflection. The Cayenne was an ungainly looking vehicle with a twenty foot camera boom. It was loaded with electronics.*

explained to me that if you allow a crew member to drive your vehicle there is a much better chance that it will be in close to all the action for a longer period of time. I didn't know that, but I do now! This is exactly what happened. Steve's Studebaker and a gorgeous 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air sedan were in the scene when President Kennedy was struck fatally from behind. Mrs. Kennedy, portrayed by actress Natalie Portman (*The Black Swan*) climbs onto the rear deck of the limousine to retrieve 'tissue' from her husband's head. Gruesome! Her bodyguard, Secret Service agent, Clint Hill is also climbing onto the rear of the car while in motion.

This scene is etched into everybody's mind that is old enough to remember that horrible day, November 22, 1963. The scene depicted above is the one they were trying to capture on film as we drove back and forth on both sides of the blocked off portion of Route 40. They kept filming 'takes' until twilight and then the Lincoln limousine 'crapped out' and refused to run shortly after the 'Secret Service' follow up Cadillac ran out of gas!

Filming was pretty much suspended from that point on and we were released for the day. Except they had to reinstall the license plates on all the antique cars that were participating in the shoot. I finally left the movie set around 7:25 pm. I received the check the following week for \$400, icing on the cake!