

Fireproof

Production Notes

Release Date: September 26, 2008

Studio: Samuel Goldwyn Films

Director: Alex Kendrick

Screenwriter: Alex Kendrick, Stephen Kendrick

Starring: Kirk Cameron, Erin Bethea, Ken Bevel, Harris Malcom, Phyllis Malcom, Stephen Dervan, Eric Young, Jason McLeod, Renata Williams, Dwan Williams, Stephanie Makulinski

Genre: Drama

MPAA Rating: PG (for thematic material and some peril)

Official Website: Fireproofthemovie.com

Detailed Storyline

At work, inside burning buildings, Capt. Caleb Holt (Kirk Cameron) lives by the old firefighter's adage: Never leave your partner behind. At home, in the cooling embers of his marriage, he lives by his own rules.

After seven years of marriage, Caleb and Catherine Holt have drifted so far apart that Catherine wishes she had never married. As the couple prepares to enter divorce proceedings, Caleb's father challenges his son to commit to a 40-day experiment he calls "The Love Dare." When Caleb discovers the book's daily challenges are tied into his parents' newfound faith, his already limited interest is further dampened.

Is it too late to fireproof his marriage? Caleb Holt's job is to rescue others, but now he has to face his toughest job ever ... rescuing his wife's heart.

About The Production

After the surprise hit *FACING THE GIANTS*, the leadership team of Sherwood Pictures—Senior Pastor Michael Catt, Executive Pastor Jim McBride, and the Kendrick Brothers—sensed their follow-up, third film should deal with issues couples face in everyday marriages.

"It's so hard to follow a movie like *FACING THE GIANTS*," says Terri Catt, who serves as casting director for Sherwood Pictures. "You don't want to do another sports movie and get stuck in a genre. When the marriage theme first came up, we were unsure. But when you see it's a love story about a married couple—you don't see that often in movies. The movie is so romantic ... it's a love story disguised as a firemen's story."

With the storyline receiving the green light, the Kendrick Brothers began their team effort to create the plot and write the screenplay for *FIREPROOF*. In some ways, the process started more than two decades ago.

“I’ve wanted to do movies since I was nine,” Alex says. “My brothers Shannon, Stephen, and I made all these silly movies in our backyard. They all had the same plot: ‘Chase ’em down, beat ’em up.’”

“As I became serious about God in high school, I wanted to do things that pleased Him. In college and my early days of ministry, I made some short films for ministry purposes. But when I saw a study that said movies and television influenced youth more than the church, I went back to my dream of wanting to do movies.”

In FIREPROOF, Sherwood’s newest film, we enter the world of Albany Fire Department Capt. Caleb Holt and his wife Catherine, a hospital public relations director. We meet the couple seven years into their quickly dying marriage.

“FIREPROOF realistically shows some of the fights and struggles that married couples experience every day,” says co-writer Stephen Kendrick.

FIREPROOF also brought on the next level of production. A storyline featuring a firefighter naturally lends itself to action-packed scenes. These include a house fire, the rescue of a child from that fire, and a dramatic rescue of people trapped in a car stuck on railroad tracks—with a train coming!

“We take this to a new level without getting terribly expensive,” producer David Nixon says. “You look at what we did with the fire scenes and the train scene and you usually have to spend a great deal of money to have scenes like that. People are going to be floored.”

For the fire scenes, a pyrotechnics team controlled the burning action, and kept the cast and crew out of harm’s way. The small house was filled not only with the pyro crew, but actors playing firefighters and the camera crew as well.

“It was very exciting, but it was also scary. I’ve never shot anything on this scale before,” says director Alex Kendrick. “Nobody got hurt, which was an answer to prayer. The pyro team did a great job giving us the look we wanted while keeping things under control. “We wanted to create a sense for what firefighters do and the danger they face. All in all, it went very well.”

After two long days of shooting fire scenes, the house was burned to the ground, not only for the visual impact in the movie, but also as a training tool for the Albany Fire Department. These scenes feature a number of real-life Albany firefighters.

Besides employing the same Panasonic Vericam used on FACING THE GIANTS, a pair of Panasonic HVX 200 cameras enabled the crew to film B-roll and shots that would have been impossible with the primary camera—including a shot from within the burning building with the camera housed in a homemade fireproof case. A smaller camera was also creatively attached to the top of the train during the rescue scene to provide a unique perspective. FIREPROOF shooting began October 15, 2007. Unlike previous endeavors, instead of capturing the images on

film, the signal was recorded digitally through a Macintosh computer (and a lot of external hard drives!).

“We still had tape, but this time it was the backup,” director of photography Bob Scott says. “Going digital was a big step. We went from 100 megabits per second on film to 220 megabits per second into the computer. That provides for much higher quality color and resolution on the screen.”

Improved lighting also paid dividends. “With GIANTS, we had to pick locations that didn’t need a lot of lighting or we’d plan to be there when the natural lighting was just right,” Bob says. “On this production, we were able to create artificial light thanks to a couple of bigger ‘guns.’ That allowed us to film at night with the right lighting.”

The film’s first shooting location was a house in Leesburg, Georgia. Ray Lloyd Realty and Construction offered one of its newly built but unsold homes to the production. Realtor and church member Bill Butler—known to FACING THE GIANTS fans as Mr. Prater, the father that gave Coach Grant Taylor a new truck—held an open house the day before production began. After months of attempting to sell the home, the property sold the week production began. Thankfully, the new homeowners were willing to wait a few extra weeks to close.

That would be the first of eight main film locations—and every one was made available at no cost. Among the other locations: two Albany fire stations, a wing and courtyard at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, and a home with acreage in the country that served as multiple scene locations.

For the first time, the crew had access to a crane. “It’s a very dramatic tool,” Bob Scott says. “It adds a lot to the production when the camera can take you somewhere you can’t normally go. A floating camera shot always invokes emotions.” A steadicam was also available during the filming, allowing moviegoers to feel like they are walking alongside characters in key scenes.

For the fire and rescue scenes, the Albany Fire Department made their newest fire engines available rather than their out-of-service trucks.

“We’ve been fortunate to have purchased 10 new pumpers in the last five years,” says AFD Training Chief Ron Rowe. “Our thinking was that if we’re going to show the Albany Fire Department in a movie, we’re going to show our best equipment.”

The film finished its six-week shooting schedule with three consecutive weeks of filming following Thanksgiving. Production wrapped with filming at Albany Fire Station 1 on Friday, December 14, 2007.

While FIREPROOF has its biggest budget to date, Sherwood Pictures has remained true to its independent filmmaking roots. The cast, crew, and church drive Sherwood’s dependent filmmaking ministry.

Utilizing the “Sherwood Model”—a necessity when Sherwood filmed its first feature in 2003—FIREPROOF featured an all-volunteer cast and a nearly all-volunteer crew. Some crewmembers, including producer David Nixon, director of photography Bob Scott and sound technician Rob Whitehurst, are veteran industry professionals who worked for much less than their standard industry rates.

From meals catered by church Sunday school classes to donated set locations and equipment, plus church members volunteering their time, ministry was an everyday occurrence.

Among the scores of volunteers was real-life Albany Fire Department Capt. Kenny Loudenbarger, a Sherwood member who served as a technical advisor (and an on-camera firefighter during the fire scene). His work actually began long before filming.

“I’d be at home or at work and Alex or Stephen would call and ask me questions about firefighting,” Loudenbarger says. “A lot of times they would ask me what a firefighter would say in a certain situation. When they started shooting the movie, they asked me to be available during the fire and rescue scenes.

“When I first read the script, I was glad I read it alone. You don’t want to be around your buddies in the fire station when you bust out in tears.”

A large number of off-duty firefighters also helped with the real fire scenes in the movie. Fire Chief James Carswell also served the production with his expertise and his commitment to having the best equipment available for the film.

“It’s been fun for our guys. This is what we do,” says AFD Training Chief Ron Rowe. “I hope what happens with the fire scenes helps tell the story of the movie.”

As with *FACING THE GIANTS* and *FLYWHEEL*, proceeds from the movie will help build Sherwood’s 82-acre public sports park in Albany—with walking trails, a fishing pond, horse stables and riding trails, tennis courts, baseball fields, and soccer fields. Albany residents are already enjoying many of the amenities with more on the way.

Kirk Cameron Biography

Kirk is best known as the lovable teenager Mike Seaver, from the award-winning series *GROWING PAINS* (1985-1992).

Still Growing is Kirk’s newly released autobiography. Kirk opens up about his early years, his rocket to stardom, and the hard choices he’s made along the way to stand on his convictions. Fans will get an up-close and personal look at what drives the former teen magazine heartthrob and find out how religion and family became the secrets behind his celebrated smile. In his own

words, Kirk shares how he's still growing through the triumphs and temptations of his Hollywood career.

Most recently, Kirk Cameron is starring in a new movie from the makers of *FACING THE GIANTS* called *FIREPROOF*. Coming in the fall of 2008, it's about a firefighter on the brink of divorce, who then tries to win back the heart of his wife.

Kirk also played the lead role of "Buck" Williams in the *LEFT BEHIND* films based on the *THE NEW YORK TIMES* bestselling novels.

Kirk also produces and co-hosts the award-winning television program called *THE WAY OF THE MASTER*. His provocative and spirituality-based reality program challenges and inspires audiences from every religious background.

Kirk's acting career started at the age of nine in commercials and in guest appearances on television programs. His first starring role happened at the age of ten in the TV series *TWO MARRIAGES*. This prepared Kirk for the role of a lifetime in the television hit comedy series *GROWING PAINS* (1985-1992) for which he received two Golden Globe nominations. His notoriety grew as well as his fan club, and he became very popular with teenagers all over the world. Producers quickly took notice and cast Kirk in a series of starring roles starting with the 1987 comedy *LIKE FATHER LIKE SON* with Dudley Moore, 1988's *LISTEN TO ME*, the 1991 drama *A LITTLE PIECE OF HEAVEN*, directed by Mimi Leder, Disney's remake of the 1960's family classic *THE COMPUTER WORE TENNIS SHOES*, Disney's *YOU LUCKY DOG*, and most recently, the ABC TV movie *GROWING PAINS: RETURN OF THE SEEVERS*. It was on the set of *GROWING PAINS* that Kirk met and married his co-star, Chelsea Noble, and together they continued their onscreen romance in the Warner Brothers sitcom *KIRK* (1995-1997). In 1989, Kirk and Chelsea founded Camp Firefly, a camp for seriously ill children and their families. They now have six beautiful children and live in Southern California.

Kirk continues to act in and produce quality, entertaining, and inspirational family programming.