

14 MINUTES *of fame*



By Jeffrey Aronson

Finally, my name might appear in the credit roll of a movie! Well, no, I didn't actually write, direct, stage, dress, light, film, edit or crew the upcoming movie, 14 Minutes, but I helped create a role for a main character, a 1995 Range Rover Classic LWB. Really, I'm that famous.

My Tinseltown moment arrived while I attended last fall's British Invasion in Stowe, VT. There I receive an email from Elise Plakke. Two years ago she directed fashion models cavorting over my Land Rover while relegating me to the sidelines; now she'd become a screenwriter with an award from the Manhattan Shorts Screenplay competition and a firm conviction that she must direct and produce her entry. I'd seen that gimlet eye before when ago she had pronounced my Series II-A's windows "too dirty" for an L.L.Bean catalogue shoot; I could feel it anew in her email.

Elise's script called for a young woman to undertake a "road trip, circa 1990's, in her fiancé's SUV. Her fiancé is quite conservative." Elise continued, "I'm having a hard time finding a vehicle that brings a style language to the film, but not too luxurious. Since it is in almost every scene in the film, the vehicle has to add to the equation of the road trip experience. And if you had a model in mind, would you know of a 1990's that could come to Maine for the shoot?"

I read the script and a character synopsis, and pondered the options. If the male character should present a rural persona, then a Defender would be perfect. A Discovery I would work if the character had a more suburban inclination; if the character should be more urbane, then a Range Rover Classic would be telegenic and chronologically appropriate. When Elise wrote me that "the character is very particular about his truck," then I knew it had to be a Range Rover. I sent my recommendations off to Elise and then stepped out onto the green fields of the British Invasion. and then stepped out onto the green fields of the British Invasion.

My eyes scanned the cars and then stopped short on a restored Coniston Green Range Rover Classic LWB. Owned by Peter Iovanela, Stowe, VT and Florida, the '95 Classic had been restored by Taylor Congleton at his shop at Rovers North. Peter had found the 57,000 mile Range Rover at an auction in New York in 2009. He considered the Classic to be "the most refined Range Rover body style. The '95 also had the updated serpentine timing belt, improved Discovery electronics and air suspension. It was the run out of the 25 year run of the model. About 5,800 of them were sold alongside the then-new P-38 Range Rover."

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With its perfect paint job (requiring multiple tries to get it right) and handsome fawn interior, the Range Rover looked stunning. Taylor Congleton noted that he needed many parts from the Rovers North warehouse to complete the year-long concours restoration. Apparently I was not alone in appreciating the refurbishment; it won the "People's Choice" award for its class at the event. Peter agreed that he would consider making it available for the movie and I sent photos off to Elise and her production team. Aside from their brief flirtation with a Nissan



Taylor Congleton and the real star of the movie, the '95 Range Rover Classic.

Pathfinder, which I soundly rejected, Peter's Range Rover met their criteria in style and color

Next came the great license plate quandary. Elise's production company had a tight budget; she could not afford an artist to recreate the required 1990's Wisconsin state license plate, so could I find her a set? A few posts on the Rovers North forum had some enthusiasts pawing through their barns and workshops, and not long after, a set of expired Wisconsin plates arrived at my house.

Coordinating the dates and locations of the filming with the availability of the Range Rover, which still resided in Vermont, challenged everyone, but Peter and Taylor delivered the Rover to southern Maine for the multiple locales of the shoots. The settings ranged from a diner in South Portland to the rustic Kingsley Pines Camp on Panther Pond in Raymond, ME, the site of the Rover's scenes.

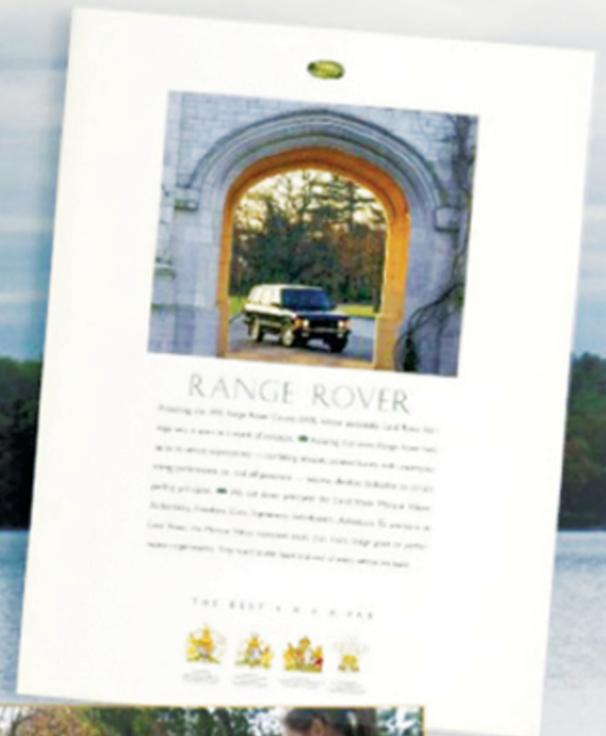
In October I drove the requested license plates to Kingsley Pines and met up with Taylor, who kept a watchful eye on the Range Rover and made certain the cast and crew treated it right. In the "It's a Small World After All" category, Taylor's uncle had once been the camp's director and Taylor had been a camper there. We spent a lot of time watching the action behind filming a movie, which zips along with all the speed of watching sap run or grass grow. At least two dozen people flew around the grounds, moving lights, cameras, scrims and boxes



Director Elise Plakke stages a shot for Lia Plakke, production assistant.



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A concours-level restoration by Taylor Congleton landed the role for this '95 Range Rover Classic.



A completely retrimmed interior – the perfect set for this movie.

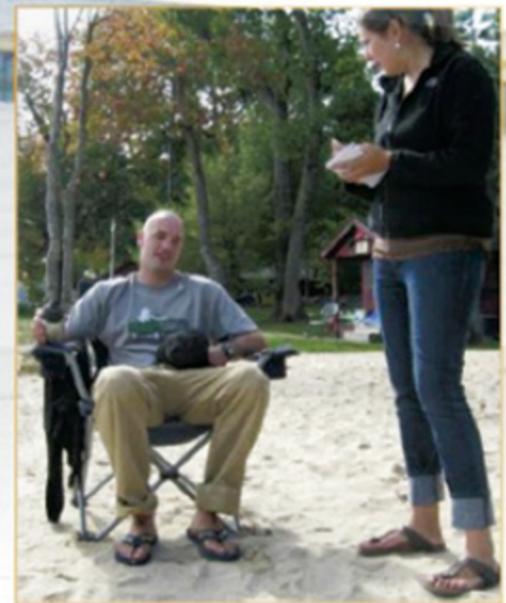
Jessica Embro certainly embodied the stylish, expressive, very attractive woman male enthusiasts would want seated in or driving their Land Rovers. She undertook the role with delight, "helping out my friend Elise." She's starred in a Cannes Film Festival entry, "Measuring Tape Girl," and "How To Marry a Mink." She has appeared in stage sketch comedy, receiving a nomination for at the 2009 Canadian Comedy Awards, and numerous commercials. Jessica also showed she could drive a Range Rover with verve in several scenes.

Kip Weeks looked just right as lanky, confident photographer ready to steal a woman's heart and walk off with her fiancé's Range Rover. He moved his family from Los Angeles to Portland so he could return to the seacoast region of Portsmouth, NH, his home town. Kip has starred in movies as varied as "Glory Road," "The Strangers," and "Stateside," as well as on television programs. He wanted to work in Maine and has focused his efforts on developing more movie production in the state. When staged on the tailgate or the passenger's seat of the Range Rover, he looked perfectly comfortable in the car.

That's more than I could say for Taylor Congleton, who had to stifle a cry anytime the crew got a bit careless around the car. Most concours automobiles don't have people jumping in and out of them, or carrying large amounts of bulky gear around them. The Range Rover itself proved to be a bit of a prima donna. Every so often its air bag suspension would let out a hiss as it adjusted for level, generally right after a grip called for silence. When a scene called for the rear seats to be lowered, one didn't just flop them aside. Taylor moved them with care; after all, he had spent a lot of time restoring them. Oh, and a rear brake line fitting started to weep fluid. It really is a Land Rover.



L-R, Jessica Embro, Kip Weeks, Elise Plakke.



Taylor Congleton takes a break on the "14 Minutes" set.

(I noticed that the doors he adjusted and the tailgate he installed closed smoothly and with perfect panel gaps.) He looked very important, checking his smartphone often in case another studio needed his expertise. Once I had delivered the license plates, my job involved sitting, carrying a few items, and dining on the free lunch and dinner [actors and crew eat better at shoots than off roaders do at events].

The two stars, Jessica Embro of Toronto, and Kip Weeks of Portland, ME, both expressed their admiration for the script and delivered their lines as naturally as imaginable. They also evinced extraordinary patience, repeating scenes often as the cameras filmed from different angles and directions, close up and far away, looking warm and comfortable while wearing insufficient amounts of clothing, and enduring a long stretch on a float in the middle of the lake as the temperatures dropped steadily. Costume and makeup artists poked and prodded them, crew members clambered around them with vast quantities of gear. Nothing seemed to phase them.

