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Former S.A. man put city in script

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Its creators are describing "EvenHand," a new film that begins production in San Antonio today, as "not your typical cop story."

New York-based screenwriter Mike Jones, formerly of San Antonio, wrote the psychological thriller about two patrol officers with vastly different approaches to their jobs,

New York director Joseph Pierson guides the movie, which stars actors Bill Sage ("American Psycho," "I shot Andy Warhol") and New York stage actor Bill Dawes.

SAPD Blue? Sort of.

"I wanted to write a movie about the man in the cop uniform," Jones said from his New York apartment. "Behind that badge is a human being."

But San Antonio gets a new name. The action takes place in the fictional city of San Lovisa.

Original songs from local bands will figure prominently in the "EvenHand" soundtrack, said production assistant Lovisa Inserra.

The low-budget independent film based on Jones' 87-page script will be shot in five weeks.

Jones, 29, graduated from Alamo Heights High School and studied cinematography at New York University Film School. The former magazine journalist said he's writing "a robot picture" for Columbia Pictures and is overseeing the rewrite of Matt Dillon's "City of Angels" script, set in Cambodia.

But his hometown remains closest to his heart. San Antonio offers a unique locale, he says.

"Detroit and Los Angeles have one look in the movies," Jones said. "San Antonio has so many faces. I love S.A. because you can point the camera in any direction and get something interesting."

The screenwriter says the story line, in which the two main characters face a cop's worst nightmare, eerily reflects local headlines.

Cinematographer Tim Orr ("George Washington") said not to expect the River Walk in the final cut. Most of the scenes are being filmed on the near East Side.

"We'll exploit the city's (landmarks) to a degree," said Orr, part of the 30-person film crew.

"The quality of the architecture here is remarkable," added director Pierson, who first read Jones' screenplay four years ago. "People are going to go 'Wow!' when they find out this is San Antonio."

Pierson, who got his start working on Woody Allen's "A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy," founded the New York-based company Cypress Films in 1987 and says there are advantages to independent filmmaking.

"There's no one second-guessing what I'm doing, no studio looking over my shoulder," he explained.

"EvenHand" is expected to be released this fall. Independent film aficionados may follow the movie's progress at www.cypressfilms.com.

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