

Document Citation

Title	Above the rim
Author(s)	
Source	<i>New Line Cinema Corporation</i>
Date	1994
Type	press kit
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	25
Subjects	Cooper, Barry Michael Bailey, David Mayhew, Ina Martin, Duane Pinkins, Tonya Wayans, Marlon Medina, Benny Brubaker, James D. Leon Pollack, Jeff Shakur, Tupac Priestley, Tom Jr. Mac, Bernie

Nies, Eric

Miller, Marcus

Film Subjects

Above the rim, Pollack, Jeff, 1994

ABOVE THE RIM

FOR FUTHER INFORMATION:

New Line Cinema/LA

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RATED: R

 **NEW LINE CINEMA**

NEW LINE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

A FILM BY JEFF POLLACK

ABOVE THE RIM

Starring:

DUANE MARTIN

LEON

TUPAC SHAKUR

BERNIE MAC

TONYA PINKINS

DAVID BAILEY

and MARLON WAYANS as Bugaloo

Casting by MARIE E. NELSON and ELLYN LONG MARSHALL

Music by MARCUS MILLER

Associate Producers MARA MANUS, STEVE GREENER,
AARON MEYERSON

Costume Designer KAREN PERRY

Production Designer INA MAYHEW

Edited by MICHAEL RIPPS, A.C.E. and JAMES MITCHELL, A.C.E.

Director of Photography TOM PRIESTLEY, JR.

Executive Producer JAMES D. BRUBAKER

Story by JEFF POLLACK & BENNY MEDINA

Screenplay by BARRY MICHAEL COOPER & JEFF POLLACK

Produced by JEFF POLLACK and BENNY MEDINA

Directed by JEFF POLLACK

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CAST

Kyle DUANE MARTIN
Shep LEON
Birdie TUPAC SHAKUR
Rollins DAVID BAILEY
Mailika TONYA PINKINS
Bugaloo MARLON WAYANS
Flip BERNIE MAC
Monroe BYRON MINNS
Motaw SHERWIN DAVID HARRIS
Bobby SHAWN MICHAEL HOWARD
Starnes HENRY SIMMONS, II
Waitress IRIS LITTLE THOMAS
Richie MICHAEL RISPOLI
Montrose ERIC NIES
Himself MILL RAFTERY
Speedy JAMES WILLIAMS
Phil Redd RICHARD RAY KIRKLAND
Tyrone TYRONE BATISTA
Young Woman CINNAMON PAIGE
Hostess DEBRA RUBINS
Will FRANK MARTIN
Official JESSE WILLIAMS
Official #2 ROBERT HARVEY
Referee #1 CUFFEE
Referee #2 ANTHONY HARGRAVES
Younger Player DARIEN BERRY

Monarch Cheerleaders LAKEESHA E. ALLEN
SHERRESE CLARK
ANNIE CHARLES
ASPEN DAVIS
CHARLENE LEVI
TAMEEKA MCKINNEY
DANNELL G. RUIZ
LESLIE TERRERO

Bombers & Birdmen KENNETH BANTUM
HOWARD BOND
TROY BOWERS
ROGER BROOKS
DORIAN GRAHAM
MARION JENKINS
GIL K. KIMBLE, JR.
SHABAR LASSEN
TROY TRUSDALE
TRACEY WALSTON
SAM WORTHEN

Stunt Coordinator JEFF WARD

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Stunt Cops.....KEITH LEON WILLIAMS
KEITH HICKLES
Stunt Youth #1JALIL LYNCH
Stunt Youth #2HAROLD BAINES
RICHARD COLBERT
Additional Stunt.....JAKE CRAWFORD
KIANTE ELAM
OASAUN ELAM
MONTY L. SIMONS
Unit Production ManagerJAMES D. BRUBAKER
First Assistant Director.....HOWARD McMASTER
Key 2nd Assistant DirectorMARY RAE THEWLIS
Production ExecutiveTIMOTHY GRAY
Executive in Charge of Post ProductionJOE FINEMAN
Creative Executive.....HELENA ECHEGOYEN
Production Supervisor.....DIANE CONN
Production Office CoordinatorDAWN MURPHY RILEY
Script Supervisor.....DEIRDRE HORGAN ASKA
Production Accountant.....MARGARET ANN McCOURT
Asst. Production Office Coordinator.....M.J. MAGBANUA
Assistant Production AccountantsRICHARD MANCUSO
HOLLY S. RYMON
Post Production Supervisor.....ELIZABETH FOX
Additional Editing.....AMY TOMPKINS
1st Assistant Editor.....LYNNE WHITLOCK
Assistant EditorsELIZABETH CASTRO
JAMES STELLAR, JR.
Apprentice Editor.....VARTAN NAZARIAN
Editing InternELAINA BALLEW
Production Attorney.....AVY ESCHENASY
Contracts AdministratorGINNY MARTINO
A Camera OperatorCRAIG DI BONA
1st Assistant A Camera.....DOUGLAS PELLEGRINO
2nd Assistant A Camera.....GERARD SAVA
Additional Camera Operators.....RICHARD C. KRATINA
JOSEPH F. COFFEY
GABOR KOVER
JONATHAN HERRON
B Camera Operator.....DAVID KNOX
1st Assistant B Camera.....LAWRENCE ORLICK
2nd Assistant B CameraFRANK RINATO
Additional 1st Assistant Camera.....DANA ALTOMARE
JONATHAN BURKHART
JEFF HAND
DANIEL SANABRIA
SUSAN STARR
Additional 2nd Assistant Camera.....JOE COLLINS
LIZ DORY
DEBORAH LIPMAN
PETER MORELLO
PAUL POSTELNICU
LAUREN LOUGHLIN
Second Unit Directors of Photography.....RICHARD C. KRATINA
ROBERT WAGNER

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Camera Trainee	ONDREJ KUBICEK
Stills Photographer	ERIC LIEBOWITZ
Gaffer	JON R. TOWER
Rigging Gaffer.....	FRANCIS "BUDDY" McBRIDE
Best Boy Electric	TOM FORD
Electricians	KEVIN JANICELLI
	MIGUEL JIMENEZ
	ROBERTO JIMENEZ
	BRIAN MAC McCULLAGH
	CHARLES E. MEERE III
	ROB-GEL MASTER-MERK
	GEORGE POTTER
	JOSEPH SCIRETTA
	BRIAN STOCKLIN
Key Grip.....	RONNIE PLANT
Best Boy Grip.....	BRAD GOSS
Dolly Grip	EDWARD W. LOWRY
Grips	BOB BRENNAN
	BILL CASSIDY
	JOHN DOLAN
	JOHN FINNERTY
	SAL LANZA
	CHRIS PRIMAVERA
Production Sound Mixer.....	MICHAEL BAROSKY
Boom Operator	TOMMY LOUIE
Property Master	NANCY GRIFFITH
Assistant Property Master	DIANE LEDERMAN
Property Assistants	DIANE E. BURTON
	LAURA ILER
	DOMINIC TOTO
Assistant Costume Designer	LYNNE MAUREEN CURTIS
Wardrobe Supervisor	JENNIFER BRYAN
Assistant Wardrobe Supervisor	BARRY MAZUREK
Additional Wardrobe Supervisors	JOHN CORBO
	JAMES WILCOX
Additional Wardrobe	KATRINA JEFFRIES
Key Makeup Artist	ELLIE WINSLOW
Additional Makeup	C. ROMANIA FORD
	DIANE FORD
	ANDREA MILLER
Key Hairstylist.....	LARRY M. CHERRY
Set Decorator	PAUL WEATHERED
Art Department Assistant	AMY MARTIN
On Set Dresser	ANTHONY BALDASARE
Set Dresser.....	DOUGLAS FECHT
	STEPHEN FINKIN
	MITCH TOWSE
	SUZANNE E. CESTARE
Construction Coordinator	GLENN PANGIONE
Scenic Artists	SARAH G. CONLY
	ARTHUR DWORIN
	MIKHAIL IVENTSKY
Leadman	JEFF NAPARSTEK
Storyboard Consultant	WARREN DRUMMOND

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Location Consultant.....LYSBETH HOPPER
Assistant Location Consultants.....DAVID GRAHAM
JEFF HORNE
Location Assistants.....JOE KELLY
ISABELLE KOSTIC CROSLEY
VINCENT TAYLOR
Music Supervisors.....ANITA CAMARATA
BENNY MEDINA
Music Executives for Death Row/Interscope Records SUGE KNIGHT & DR. DRE
Executive in Charge of Music for New Line.....TOBY EMMERICH
Music Editor.....EARL GHAFARI
Post Production Sound.....DIGITAL SOUND & PICTURE, INC.
Supervising Sound Editor.....CRAIG BERKEY
Sound Effects Editors.....MATT WATERS
CRAIG SADLER
MARK COOKSON
LISLE ENGLE
STEWART NELSON
PIERO MURA
PAUL URMSON
Dialogue Editors.....DAVE GRANT
DAVID MELHASE
DANIEL IRWIN
DAN JAMELE
LOUIS CREVELING
STEVE SCOVILLE
Digital Transfer Engineer.....SEAN GARNHART
ADR Editor.....TIM BOGGS
ADR Mixer.....DEREK MARCIL, C.A.S.
Foley Mixer.....DAVID TORRES
Foley Walkers.....ROBERT FRIEDMAN
PAIGE POLLACK
GINGER GEARY
Foley Editor.....DANIELLE GHENT
Re-Recorded at.....DIGITAL SOUND & PICTURE, INC.
Re-Recording Mixers.....JOHN ROSS, C.A.S.
JOSHUA E. SCHNEIDER
CRAIG BERKEY
Loop Group.....LA MAD DOGS
Technical Sports Consultant.....CECIL WATKINS
Technical Basketball Advisor.....RICHARD "PEE WEE" KIRKLAND
2nd 2nd Assistant Director.....PARNES CARTWRIGHT
Product Placement.....TONY HOFFMAN
Product Placement Consultant/New York.....SHARRON CANNON
Unit Publicist.....CASSANDRA BUTCHER
Teamster Captain.....THEODOR A. BROWN
Drivers.....WILLIAM BAKER
TOM BEATTIE
TIMOTHY P. CASSELLA
ALBERT COLELLA
BOB DONAVAN
JOHN FEATHERSTONE
MICHAEL FENNIMORE
WILLIAM K. GASKINS

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Drivers (cont.)GUS HEIN
JOHN P. JONES
LEONARD LUIZZI
AVIE SHWARTZBACH
CHARLES SPILLANE
BARRY STANTON
BARRY SWEENEY
GEORGE WASHINGTON
CARLOS WILLIAMS
Parking Coordinator.....TERRY "T-BONE" RHODES
Asst. Parking Coordinator.....MAURICE "PEE-WEE" EDWARDS
Assistant to Mr. Brubaker.....KATRENIAH L. WASHINGTON
Assistant to Mr. Pollack.....SHARRON CANNON
Key Office Production Assistants.....DANIEL EXILE RAMIREZ
PETER SCHON
Cast Liaison.....ALAN JAMES SCOTT
Key Set Production Assistant.....JOHN "YAYHA" LYONS
Set Production Assistants.....WAYNE "JO-BEAR" BRISTO
ERIC L. CLARK (THE E-MAN)
SHANNON M. HAWKINS
KEVIN JACKSON
WILLIAM KEYS
RAFAEL OSORIO
SHARON PARKER
GINGI ROCHELLE
Production Assistants.....EDWIN DAVIS
COURTNEY FAIN
WILLIAM KEYS
HASSON JAVIEOR TAYLOR
DGA TraineeBRIAN A. YORK
Production Interns.....ANTON AUSTIN
CAROLYN ANNETTE BENJAMIN
KIMBERLY DEMEK
MAURICE DWYER
MARY GARVEY
RENA JORDAN
JENNIFER MADELOFF
DAVID PRICE
FELICIA STANDEL
ADOLFO VASQUEZ
SANDRA WEST
Caterers/Craft ServicesOLIVETT & CAMPBELL
Extras Casting.....YOLANDE GERALDS
Extras Casting Assistants.....KEITH GUNTHORPE
ULYSSES TERRERO
Payroll ServicesFILM PAYROLL, INC.
RESIDUAL PAYMENTS, INC.
AXIUM PAYROLL SERVICES
Opticals byHOWARD A. ANDERSON CO. and R.G.B. OPTICAL INC.
Main Title Design.....NEAL THOMPSON/SILVER STRAW PRODUCTIONS
Color TimerMATVEY SHATZ
Negative Cutter.....AFTER SEVEN NEGATIVE CUTTING, INC.
Executive in Charge of Production.....DEBORAH MOORE
Location equipment byCECO INTERNATIONAL

Insurance provided by.....ALBERT G. RUBEN & CO., INC.

Color by Deluxe

Prints by Deluxe

Filmed with Panavision Camera and Lenses

Soundtrack Available on Death Row/Interscope Records

MUSIC CREDITS

"PAIN"

Performed by 2Pac

Written by T. Shakur & R. Walker

Courtesy of Interscope Records

Contains a sample from "LIVING INSIDE YOUR LOVE" (D. Grusin/E. Klugh) as
recorded by Earl Klugh.

"DEEPER"

Performed by Lord G.

Written by Mknoto Fields

"MOBBIN' WITH THA DOGG POUND"

Performed by Tha Dogg Pound

Written by Dat Nigga Daz & Kurupt the Kingpin

Courtesy of Death Row/Interscope Records

"ANYTHING"

Performed by SWV

Additional vocals by Allen Gordon, Jr. (a.k.a ALLSTAR) and JOE

Written by Brian Alexander Morgan

SWV appears courtesy of The RCA Records Label

JOE appears courtesy of Mercury Records

Contains a sample from "GET UP AND DANCE") (a.k.a. "FREEDOM") (Tyrone
Armstrong/Ray Smith) as recorded by Grand Master Melle Mel and The Furious
Five.

"PART TIME LOVER"

Performed by H-Town

Written by Devane Swing and Darryl Pearson

Courtesy of Luke Records

"PUMP PUMP"

Performed by Snoop Doggy Dogg, featuring Lil' Malik (a.k.a. Lil Hershey Loc)

Written by Snoop Dogg, Dr. Dre & Lil' Malik

Courtesy of Death Row/Interscope Records

"MI MONIE RITE"

Performed by Lord G.

Written by Lord G., C. Small, C. Lane

Courtesy of Death Row/Interscope Records

"JUST SAY YA NO"

Performed by CPO - Boss Hog

Written by CPO & Tony "T." Green

Courtesy of Death Row/Interscope Records

"ALRIGHT"

Performed by Terron Brooks

Written by Vincent Berry

"I'M STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU"

Performed by Al B. Sure!

Written by Al Green, Al Jackson, Jr., Willie Mitchell

Courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc.

"CRACK 'EM"

Performed by O.F.T.B.

Written by Ronald Watkin, Kevin White, Sammie Williams, Scottie Bowen, Tony White and Quik

Original Bass Line written by Scottie Bowen

Courtesy of Death Row/Interscope Records

Contains a sample from "PLAYIN' YOUR GAME, BABY" (S. Hudman/A. Johnson) as recorded by Barry White.

"DOGG POUND 4 LIFE"

Performed by Tha Dogg Pound Gangstas: Dat Nigga Daz, Snoop Dogg & Kurupt the Kingpin

Written by Dat Nigga Daz, Kurupt the Kingpin, Snoop Dogg

Courtesy of Death Row/Interscope Records

"DIDN'T MEAN TO TURN YOU ON"

Performed by 2nd II None

Written by Dee, KK & Quik

Courtesy of Profile Records, Inc.

"OH SHIT"

Performed by The Pharcyde

Written by J. Martinez, T. Hardson, E. Wilcox, D. Stewart

Courtesy of Delicious Vinyl Records

Contains a sample from "BEALE STREET" (Sylvester Kyner) as recorded by Donald Byrd.

"THEME FROM SHAFT"

Written by Isaac Hayes

"WORLDWIDE"

Performed by Akinyele

Written by A. Adams

Courtesy of Interscope Records

"OLD TIMES' SAKE"

Performed by Sweet Sable
Written by Miller/Brace/Strong
Sweet Sable appears courtesy of Street Life/Scotti Bros. Records
Nefertiti for Ageniah appears courtesy of Mercury Records

"(SO FAR) THE GHETTO BEEN GOOD TO ME"

Performed by YZ
Written by A. Hill
Courtesy of Livin' Large Records

"AFRO PUFFS"

Performed by The Lady of Rage
Written by Dat Nigga Daz & The Lady of Rage
Courtesy of Death Row/Interscope Records

"BIG PIMPIN"

Performed by Tha Dogg Pound Gangstas: Dat Nigga Daz, Snoop Dogg, Nate Dogg
& Big Pimpin' Delemond
Written by Dat Nigga Daz, Snoop Dogg, Nate Dogg, Delemond
Courtesy of Death Row/Interscope Records

"TAKE IT TO YA FACE"

Performed by Naughty By Nature
Written by V. Brown, K. Gist, A. Criss
Courtesy of Tommy Boy Records

"HOLLER IF YA HEAR ME"

Performed by 2Pac
Guest Vocals by Live Squad
Written by T. Shakur, Live Squad, N. Whitfield, B. Strong
Courtesy of Interscope Records
Contains sample from "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" (N. Whitfield, B. Strong) as recorded by Roger

"STICK 'EM UP"

Performed by The Beastie Boys
Written by Adam Horovitz/Adam Yauch/Mike Diamond/Wendell Fite
Courtesy of Grand Royal Records

"POUR OUT A LITTLE LIQUOR"

Performed by THug Life, featuring 2Pac Shakur
Written by T. Shakur
Courtesy of Interscope Records
Contains a sample from "CRY TOGETHER" (K. Gamble/L. Huff) as recorded by The O'Jays.

"SPIRIT CHEERS"

Written abd Performed by The Georgetown University Pep Band
Courtesy of Georgetown University

"REGULATE"

Performed by Nate Dogg & Warren G.

Lyrics by Nate Dogg & Warren G.

Nate Dogg appears courtesy of Death Row/Interscope Records

Warren G. appears courtesy of Violator/RAL/Chaos

Contains sample from portions of "I KEEP FORGETTIN" (Jerry Lieber/Mike Stoller) as recorded by Michael McDonald.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The New York State Governor's Office for
Motion Picture and Television Development, Bruce Feinberg, Director.

The personnel of the New York City Mayor's Office
for Film, Theatre and Broadcasting.

The members of the Special Operations Division
of the New York City Police Department.

CBS SPORTS

Georgetown University
Seton Hall University
USAir Arena
CentreVision
Tilden High School
Rock

Bryan Unger
Bob Harvey
Terry Casaletta
Michael Spatt

Mike De Luca

THANKS ALSO TO:

100 Miles
180 Above
5001 Flavors
American Streak
B.A.M.N.
Ben & Jerry's
Black Market Struggle Gear
British Knights
Da Streetz Inc.
Hongson International
Ikea
Joop! Jeans
McDonald's
Pizarro Designs

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Shaka King Menswear
Skidz
Spaulding
Walker Wear
Wonder Bread
Xanthus
YES Clothing Co.
162! and X-tra Phat Productions

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IATSE

Dolby

MPAA #32601

Rated R

Released by New Line Cinema

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Above the Rim is a powerful and fast-paced film about the influence two disparate men (Leon, Tupac Shakur) wield over dazzling high school basketball player Kyle-Lee Watson (Duane Martin). Running with one man places Kyle on a dangerous fast track of cash and notoriety, while the other offers a chance to go to college and play pro ball.

Starring an ensemble cast featuring Duane Martin (*The Inkwell*), Leon (*Cliffhanger*), Tupac Shakur (*Poetic Justice*), Marlon Wayans (*Mo' Money*), Tonya Pinkins, Bernie Mac (*House Party 3*), Eric Nies (*MTV*), and David Bailey, *Above the Rim* was directed, co-written and produced by Jeff Pollack. James D. Brubaker served as Executive Producer of the film which was produced by Benny Medina and co-written by Barry Michael Cooper (*New Jack City*, *Sugar Hill*).

Inspired by outdoor basketball tournaments which originated from Rucker's Playground in Harlem, *Above the Rim* is set against the fiercely competitive asphalt courts where pick-up games are proving grounds for amateurs and professionals alike.

Kyle-Lee Watson (Duane Martin) is a high-school basketball star who seeks to parlay his athletic prowess into a one-way ticket to the NBA. Tempered by his strong-willed and protective single mother Mailika Williams (Tonya Pinkins), Kyle is warned that his future shouldn't depend on the game. But he becomes increasingly frustrated when top college scouts target him, but don't immediately offer a spot on their team.

As his final season winds to a close, Kyle feels the pressure to perform, leading him to grandstand in hopes of impressing a visiting recruiter from Georgetown University. While his one-man show alienates his teammates and coach, it's a masterpiece to Bugaloo (Marlon Wayans). Bugaloo, Kyle's best friend,

introduces him to Birdie (Tupac Shakur), a drug-dealer who is busy assembling a team to compete in the neighborhood Shoot Out -- a prestigious street basketball tournament that awards bragging rights and community respect to the champions.

Intrigued by Birdie's connections and ability to quickly propel Kyle's career, he abandons his school-sponsored Shoot Out squad to run instead with The Birdmen.

Proud of his prized catch, Birdie woos his newest protege with finesse, showering the impressionable athlete with promises of fame, gifts, women, cash and more if he helps win the tournament. Ultimately, this new relationship will test Kyle's deeply rooted values.

In the ensuing days, Kyle's mother begins her own relationship when she meets Shep (Leon). Shep is on the rebound. Once a living legend of the playground courts, he deserted his family and skipped town to escape overwhelming feelings of guilt after his best friend's accidental death. Now, years later, Shep has returned home and taken a job as a security guard at Kyle's high school. Seeing aspects of himself in the young athlete, he hopes to steer Kyle away from the destructive influences he sees in Birdie.

Kyle, who shuns subtle advice from Shep, discourages his mother from getting involved with the "toy cop." As Mailika and Shep grow closer, Kyle pries into Shep's mysterious past. What he discovers shocks him. Not only was Shep a star on the rise who fell from grace, he is also Birdie's estranged brother. In a climactic confrontation between the two men, Kyle warns Shep to stay clear of his mother. Unable to escape the demons plaguing his past, Shep decides to quit his job and again leave town - but this time for good.

As Kyle prepares for the Shoot-Out, he learns the price of running with a gangsta. He finds out Birdie killed Flip (Bernie Mac), an innocent homeless man who picked a fight with Kyle. Stunned by this act of senseless brutality and afraid of

Birdie's violent temper, he re-teams with his original Shoot-Out squad just in time for the tournament.

As the competition whittles down to the championship game, The Birdmen are pitted against Kyle's team, The Bombers. From the tip-off, it's evident the match is going to be an uneven and overtly physical grudge match. As the second half of the game proceeds, Kyle's team is being badly beaten.

When the game seems hopelessly lost, Shep, who decides not to let history repeat itself, appears from the crowd and suits up to join The Bombers. With Shep's addition, the game slowly turns around and The Bombers catch up. In the final seconds, Shep passes off to Kyle who stuffs the game-winning basket.

Furious about losing, Birdie seeks revenge and orders one of his posse to kill Kyle. As a gun is pulled from a courtside dufflebag, Shep dives in front of Kyle and takes the bullet.

In the end, Birdie becomes the target of a hit himself and Kyle goes on to play at Georgetown, watched on national television by his closest admirers - his mother, Coach Rollins ... and Shep.

Ultimately, *Above the Rim* exposes the turbulent climate that transforms intimidation on the streets into domination on the courts, as young men turn to basketball to escape their all too violent surroundings.

BEHIND THE SCENES

When Dr. James Naismith invented basketball in 1891, he never imagined his sport would one day become a multi-billion dollar business. Today, basketball is host to world-renowned players and coaches who command seven-figure paychecks. But fame and fortune were never motivators to Naismith or the late Holcombe

Rucker, whose legacy inspired real-life shoot-out tournaments like the one depicted in *Above the Rim*.

Keeping inner-city kids away from trouble was Rucker's passion. A recreation supervisor for the Department of Parks in New York City, Rucker formed a Summer basketball league in the early 1950's that catered to all levels of play -- from novice to professional. When he died at age 38 of cancer, the interborough league he started was named in his honor, as was the playground where much of the movie was filmed -- a fitting tribute to a man who perhaps more than anyone else in the last century emulated the pure spirit Naismith intended when he gave birth to the game.

Located at 155th Street and 8th Avenue, Rucker's Playground has been the heart of street basketball for the past 40 years. In the 60's and 70's, it served as an unofficial training camp for some of the greatest stars the sport has ever witnessed. From Julius "Dr. J" Erving and Wilt Chamberlain to Kareem Abdul Jabbar and Mike Riordan, notable pros the world round converged on Harlem every Summer to hold court and mix their skills with the unbelievably talented pick-up players at Rucker's.

"If you ask anyone who knows anything about the game, they'll tell you that in the 60's and 70's the best basketball in the country was played in the Summer at Rucker's, after the NBA season had ended," explains Jeff Pollack, director, co-writer and producer of *Above the Rim*.

Professional athletes returning to the playground to compete against vastly superior amateurs was a fertile and fast-paced scenario for Pollack, who wanted to make a movie about "a guy who comes from nowhere and is better than anybody else."

To assist with the film, the production hired technical advisors like Richard "Pee-Wee" Kirkland, a legend of the Rucker leagues. Kirkland never played

professional ball but is fondly remembered by players like Kareem Abdul Jabbar, who called him the best point guard he ever went up against.

Nate "Tiny" Archibald, a fourteen season veteran of the NBA, also recalled Kirkland's caliber of play. "I used to go up against Pee-Wee on the streets and in the playgrounds. He was one of the best there ever was," Archibald said. "His problem was that along with being smart, he was a street warrior too. When Chicago offered him a contract, he just laughed in their face and said, 'Hey, I could make more money in a couple of days out on the street,'" Archibald remembered.

To this day, aficionados of street basketball talk about the hot afternoon when Kirkland and Joe Hammond, one of the film's featured playground players, squared off against a team of famed professionals including Dr. J. In many ways, *Above the Rim* chronicles the lives of men like Hammond and Kirkland, Pollack believes.

"What we've tried to do is make a movie about how life and basketball can become intertwined," Pollack explains. "For many, basketball is the only way out. And that's not just true in New York. It's the same in Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia -- any basketball hot bed, you name it. For every guy who becomes a star, there are 50 more who are just as talented and don't make it. Some of them have 130 IQ's and are flipping burgers. This is a film about what happens to these guys -- the ones who make it and those who don't."

For Duane Martin, who stars as Kyle in *Above the Rim*, the film hits close to home. "It's amazing how much this story parallels my life," Martin said. "Here I am, a kid from Brownsville, New York with a basketball scholarship to New York University. That was an incredible gift to me not only athletically, but also academically. When I signed my one-year deal with the New York Knicks, I knew that anything I set out to do from that point on would be possible." When he left the Knicks, he turned to acting. "It's pretty ironic, here I am back where I began in New

York City, starring in a movie about basketball. How's that for a strange twist of fate?"

To bolster the film's authenticity, Kirkland and Pollack tapped into the best of the current playground hustlers. In all, more than 70 were cast to complete the crucial shoot-out tournament sequence. "At least 95% of the guys we hired had the moves, talent and ability to make it to Division One college ball and they weren't ever able to get there. They were qualified to play but were disqualified by socio-economic forces before they were even given a chance," Pollack says.

Nowhere are those social dynamics more visible than in Harlem, where the desperation of the inner-city provides a graphic and telling backdrop for *Above the Rim*.

Because such harsh realities have always hung heavily over Harlem, Rucker's dream was to bring big-name ball players back to the ghetto to offer children influential contact with appropriate role models; living personalities who could both inspire and motivate them to improve their lives. When *Above the Rim* began setting up its caravan of wardrobe trailers and production vehicles on October 18, 1993, hundreds of excited neighborhood children would wait patiently, sometimes for hours, just for a shot at an autograph, a glimpse of the cast or a chance for a brief one-on-one with one of their idols.

Noted Tupac Shakur, who plays Birdie in the film, "Children have the power to do anything they want, but they have to be inspired so they can aspire. They need self worth. They need positive influences in their lives to mold their future. I spoke with a lot of the kids out here and they're hungry. Hungry for hope. Maybe these few days of shooting (in Harlem) will change some young man or young woman's life. I hope so."

ABOUT THE CAST

DUANE MARTIN makes his motion picture starring debut in *Above the Rim* playing Kyle-Lee Watson, a high school basketball star who is torn between the competing influences of a drug dealer and a legendary local athlete who returns home to face his beleaguered past.

No stranger to basketball, Martin ranked among the top-20 college players in the nation when he starred as a point guard on the New York University team. He later signed a one-year contract with the New York Knicks, but turned to acting after his deal was terminated.

Martin caught his first major break in Ron Shelton's *White Men Can't Jump*, portraying one of the final twosome that Woody Harrelson and Wesley Snipes battle against on the basketball court. For his next project, he stars in Matty Rich's *The Inkwell*.

Among his television credits, Martin received a Daytime Emmy Award nomination for his starring role in the CBS Schoolbreak Special "Different Worlds: A Story of Interracial Love." He was a series regular in NBC's "Out All Night," for which the Daily Variety chose him as a break-out star for the year for the '92-'93 season. The network then offered him a development deal to star in and co-produce a sit-com for TriStar Television.

LEON stars as Shep, a former basketball star who tries to come to terms with his life while confronting the demons of his past in *Above the Rim*.

Most recently, Leon starred as Derrice Bannock in the hit film *Cool Runnings* and as the villainous Kinnette in *Cliffhanger*, making him the top billing African-American actor for 1993. He also starred as J.T., Robert Townsend's womanizing brother in *The Five Heartbeats*

Although Leon has been acting for less than a decade, he has accumulated an impressive list of motion picture and television credits. He made his feature film debut as Fortune Smith, Matt Dillon's best friend in *The Flamingo Kid*. Other highlights of his motion picture career include featured roles in *All the Right Moves*, *Band of the Hand*, *Colors*, and *Street Walkin'*.

On television, Leon starred in the mini-series "The Women of Brewster Place" and was featured in the Emmy Award-winning "A Mother's Courage: The Mary Thomas Story," and "The Father Clements Story." His realistic portrayal of a basketball player who falls prey to drug addiction in "Midnight Caller" garnered him the Scott Newman Drug Abuse Award.

He gained widespread notoriety as the saintly statue who comes to life in Madonna's provocative music video, "Like A Prayer."

TUPAC SHAKUR stars as Birdie, a notorious drug dealer whose grip of power and promise of fame entices an impressionable young athlete in *Above the Rim*.

Best known to millions as rap star 2Pac, Shakur broke into feature films in Ernest Dickerson's *Juice*. Last year he received critical praise for his portrayal of Lucky, Janet Jackson's love interest in John Singleton's *Poetic Justice*. *Above the Rim* is Shakur's third feature film.

A former member of the successful hip-hop group Digital Underground, Shakur's current album "Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z" (Never Ignorant Getting Goals Accomplished) is a platinum seller with two top-10 singles. His controversial recording debut "2Pacalypse Now" has sold more than 450,000 copies worldwide.

Shakur began acting when he was 13 years-old, performing in "A Raisin In The Sun" at the legendary Apollo Theater. He is a former student of Baltimore High School of Performing Arts.

BERNIE MAC turns in his first dramatic performance in the role of Flip Johnson, a homeless man who plays a mean game of basketball in *Above the Rim*.

Mac is best known for his standing ovation performances on such late night comedy series as "Russell Simmons Def Comedy Jam" on HBO and "The Arsenio Hall Show." Mac is currently in the midst of the "Who Ya Wit" comedy tour and has been selling out venues all across the country. He is also developing a sitcom for Fox-TV.

Mac landed his first major film role in New Line Cinema's *House Party 3* and appeared in *Mo' Money* with Damon and Marlon Wayans.

TONYA PINKINS portrays Mailika Williams, a strong willed and protective single mother who demands respect from the men in her life - whether it be her son Kyle or her boyfriend Shep

An accomplished stage and screen actress, Pinkins has appeared in the feature films *See No Evil*, *Hear No Evil*, *Hot Shots* and *Beat Street*.

Perhaps best known for her daytime drama roles, Pinkins has been a recurring character on "All My Children," "Guiding Light" and "As The World Turns." Other television credits include "The Cosby Show," "Law & Order," "Crime Story," "Strapped" and the telefilm "Rage of Angels II."

On Broadway, she won the 1992 Tony Award as Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her performance in "Jelly's Last Jam." Other theater credits include "Merrily We Roll Along," "Little Shop of Horrors," "A...My Name is Alice," and "Believin'."

MARLON WAYANS stars as Bugaloo, the comic relief of Birdie's entourage who allies himself with Kyle in *Above the Rim*. Wayans made his feature film debut in *Mo' Money*, co-starring as a reckless comrade in crime opposite his real-life brother, Damon Wayans.

A featured regular on the hit comedy series "In Living Color," Wayans is the youngest of 10 siblings. Wayans graduated from the famed High School for the Performing Arts in New York City and attended Howard University.

Wayans was originally cast in *Batman Returns* for the role of Robin. Most recently, he developed a series pilot for NBC with his brother Shawn titled "Brother to Brother."

ERIC NIES, best known as an MTV on-air personality, makes his feature film debut in *Above the Rim* as Kip Montrose, Kyle-Lee Watson's chief competitor.

Nies began his professional career as a model and commercial actor, pitching products for Coca Cola, Jovan and American Airlines before catching the attention of producers of MTV's verite series "Real World."

When the show debuted, Nies became MTV's favorite personality and soon after, he was made host of "The Grind." He also co-hosted the cable channel's 1993 Spring Break festivities.

DAVID BAILEY has played cowboys and con men, doctors and drug addicts, gangsters and good-guys during his 25-year career as a character actor.

With *Above the Rim*, the prolific actor adds a basketball coach to his seemingly endless list of credits. As Shep's confidante and friend, Bailey's Coach Rollins is the only person who has faith in the former basketball star.

Bailey's face is immediately recognizable, but he is perhaps best known for his portrayal of Russ Matthews from the daytime drama "Another World." Among

his countless credits he appeared as a regular on "Kate and Allie" and in Jane Curtin's series "Working It Out."

On stage, Bailey has starred in "Orphans," "Death Trap," "Light Up The Sky," and Neil Simon's "I Ought To Be In Pictures."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JEFF POLLACK makes his filmmaking debut as director, co-screenwriter and producer of *Above the Rim*.

Pollack is the co-creator and executive producer of the hit NBC television series "Fresh Prince of Bel Air, " starring Will Smith. He is co-founder of Medina/Pollack Entertainment, along with his creative partner Benny Medina. The company produces and develops feature films and television series.

JAMES D. BRUBAKER serves as Executive Producer of *Above the Rim*. A veteran production manager, Brubaker has overseen set operations for films such as *Raging Bull*, *Problem Child*, *Mr. Baseball*, *Rocky II* and *Rocky III*.

He began his career as a transportation coordinator and has served as an associate producer, line producer, producer or executive producer on films including *The Right Stuff*, *Cobra*, *Over the Top*, *Patty Hearst* and *Running Mates*.

BENNY MEDINA, whose partnership with Jeff Pollack helped create the hit television series "Fresh Prince of Bel Air," is producer of *Above the Rim*.

An accomplished record executive, Medina is Senior Vice President, A&R and General Manager of the Black Music Division for Warner Brothers Records. Since joining Warner Bros. in 1985, he has signed such acts as Atlantic Starr and discovered Jay King and Club Nouveau. He has developed an eclectic roster of

talent that includes Prince, Al B., Ray Charles, The Winans, Karyn White, Tevin Campbell and Al Jarreau among others. His tenure has been widely credited for re-positioning the Warner label as a major force in pop and urban music.

TOM PRIESTLEY, JR. is *Above the Rim's* Director of Photography. Responsible for the fast pace and gritty look of the film, Priestly has lead camera teams on such films as *Blue Chips*, *Calendar Girl* and *Beat Street*. He served as second unit director of photography on *Demolition Man*, *A League of Their Own*, and many others. On the small screen, Priestly's credits include "Miami Vice," "Against the Law," "Perfect Crimes," and "Intruders."

BARRY MICHAEL COOPER is one of the most sought after writers in Hollywood today. As co-screenwriter of *Above the Rim*, he brings another tale of the inner-city to life. Cooper's screenwriting credits include *Sugar Hill*, *New Jack City*, *Thirsty*, and *Clocking the Beat*. An award-winning journalist, Cooper has written stories for Village Voice and Spin Magazine.

INA MAYHEW has an extensive background as a set designer for theater and opera and adds *Above the Rim* to her film credits as a Production Designer. On stage, she has designed "I Have A Dream," "My Father My Son," "Round Midnight," "Consequence," "Carmen," "Casanova," and "Cenerentola" among others.

Mayhew began her film career on the critically acclaimed silent film *Sidewalk Stories*. Since 1989, she has designed sets for *Rain Without Thunder*, *Hot Rod Brown*, *Hallelujah*, and Spike Lee's upcoming *D.R.O.P. Squad*.

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MARCUS MILLER (Composer) has written scores for such films as *House Party*, *Boomerang*, and *Siesta*. A composer, producer, recording artist and musician, Miller has three solo albums to his credit: "The Sun Don't Lie," "Marcus Miller," and "Suddenly."

A former member of the house band on "Saturday Night Live," Miller toured with legendary trumpeter Miles Davis for 18 months and has collaborated on many albums with Davis, Luther Vandross, David Sanborn and Boz Scaggs, among others.

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