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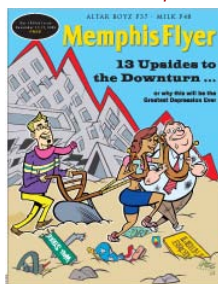
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December 17, 2008

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- Viewpoint
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Indie Memphis Monday Picks

OCTOBER 22, 2007 - 05:57 AM

The Indie Memphis Film Festival continues today at Malco's Studio on the Square. Our picks from today's slate of screenings:

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Run, Granny, Run

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Pick of the Day: *I Was a Zombie for the FBI*

This updated take on the mid-century creature feature was locally shot in the early 1980s and has built a reputation as a minor cult classic over the years. It screens at Indie Memphis as part of the festival's "Back in the Day" selection of local filmmaking that predates the festival. See our [story](#) in this week's paper for the backstory on *I Was a Zombie for the FBI*.

Screens at 9:40 p.m.

Local Pick: *Tricks*

Pittstop Productions had a good showing at last year's Indie Memphis Film Festival with *What Goes Around æ€*. This year, the production company is back with *Tricks*, written and directed by and starring DeAara Lewis. (Rod Pitts, Pittstop's titular captain, serves as the film's director of photography.)

Tricks is a return to that Bluff City cinematic touchstone: the prostitution industry. Where this movie separates itself, though, is that it is set in an almost completely female world, and, better yet, mostly succeeds in trading lurid details for naturalism. It's a cousin of cinema veritæ, but not in the skuzzy, exploitation-as-an-ulterior-motive way. (The film's soundtrack appropriately opens with the ambience of birds chirping.)

The film kicks in motion as Tina (April Hale) is referred for work at Healing Touch Massage, a euphemistically named brothel. There she encounters the madam (Deneka Lashea), the old-school prostie Jean (Joanne Brown), the territorial Natalie (Tracee Lashea), and the hooker with a heart of gold Michelle (DeAara Lewis).

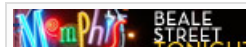
The movie is largely interested in the home lives and family dealings of its cast of characters. *Tricks* is not a preachy film. It is morally ambiguous, but, again, in an au naturale way. And just because it isn't seedy, it doesn't mean it paints a rosy picture of these women's lives, either. For one, the madam has to bribe Jon W. Sparks -- I mean, the police -- to stay in business. Call it monetizing law enforcement. -- Greg Akers

Screens at 9:55 p.m.

Doc Pick: *Run, Granny, Run*

Filmmaker Marlo Poras graced Indie Memphis with the documentary *Mai's America* (the story of a Vietnamese exchange student in rural Mississippi) a few years ago. This year, Poras is back with her second film, *Run Granny Run*, which chronicles the failed 2004 Senate run by the then-94-year-old Doris Haddock, who ran as the democratic Senate nominee against powerful Republican incumbent Judd Gregg. Haddock, who had four years earlier walked across the country to campaign against the influence of big money

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on American democracy, makes for a captivating subject -- lucid, funny, grounded, and unusually self-critical. Haddock's campaign was meant to "be a model for regular people running for office without raising money for special interests," but Poras' film suggests her campaign may have been just the opposite: A testament to hard difficult it is for someone like Haddock to run for prominent office while facing not being taken seriously, not being able to raise sufficient funds, and the prospect of going into personal debt that can't be erased with being a successful career politician. -- Chris Herrington

Screens at 1:05 p.m.

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Drew Smith, Memphis 10/23/2007 - 11:17am

Due to screening troubles, they had to cut the screening of "Tricks" short last night. They have rescheduled for Tuesday night at 9:55pm. The first half that we were able to see was great: very funny, and the plot was building nicely... DeAara is a talented filmmaker, and if you're into Indie film at all, you should try to see her movie. It's worth the time...

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