

'Three Blind Saints' Premieres in Kansas City

More than 800 people, Hollywood filmmakers, several film distributors as well as cast members from Hollywood attended the premiere of *Three Blind Saints* in Kansas City, Mo. The feature-length movie is Steve Gray's film debut. The founder and senior pastor of World Revival Church, Gray was the creator and producer of the Emmy-award winning *Steve & Kathy Show*.

The cast is a mix of new actors and seasoned actors such as Barry Corbin (*Northern Exposure*, *The Closer*, *One Tree Hill*), Richard Speight Jr. (*Supernatural*, *Band of Brothers*), Stelio Savante (*Ugly Betty*, *The Office*), Irma P. Hall (*Ladykillers*, *Collateral*) and Victor Raider-Wexler (*King of Queens*). "I was looking to do a faith-based film," Hall says. "Brad [Wilson] called me and told me about *Three Blind Saints*, and I was in." Hall added that her first trip to Kansas City was during the filming of the movie.

Three Blind Saints is a tongue-in-cheek comedy drama about three wayward men forced to do community service at Rocky Road Community Church. Jamal (Elijah Rock), Frankie (Savante) and Pastor Sam (Speight) tell the judge that they got "saved" while in jail. The judge sentences them to help Rusty Pickens (Corbin) lead a small fledgling congregation. In one of the most memorable moments of the film, Pickens tells Pastor Sam that "God is a hot commodity."

Pickens plans to build a megaplex church with a sports bar and mall. Pastor Sam is thrown into a crisis because he's faking faith and can't help a woman (Audrey Matos) he cares for who has a child in the hospital. The film is refreshingly free of profanity and sexuality. "I wanted a film that was a bridge-builder," Gray says. "I didn't want viewers to feel like they

were going to a church service while watching the movie. I wanted them to have fun and to be inspired to have an encounter with God.”

Gray adds: “I’ve been an insider in religion as a pastor for a church. I have some exaggerated examples in the film of the crazy things people do to a new a pastor who has appointments all day with wacko people who say they are Christians. I hit it head-on, and everyone laughs at it.”

Corbin says he’s worked on low-budget and high-budget pictures and that “this was a delightful experience. I had a good time.” The film was shot in 18 days in the Kansas City metro area with more than 200 volunteers who helped with set design, construction, as well as acting (as extras). Matos says she was amazed at the unity of everyone on the set: “I felt like I was among family.”

The 90-minute film was directed by John Eschenbaum and produced by Brad Wilson, an award-winning producer who has led Robert Duvall’s production company. The director of photography, Tal Lazar, has worked on TV shows and music videos in Israel. The film is pending distribution, and a limited theatrical release is planned. In the meantime, Gray is writing his second screenplay, tentatively titled *Something to Believe In*, which will be filmed in Israel.