

Candid stress relief cure



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Kevin Ehrenreich, Alexa Strachan and Louw Venter star in the candid camera film, *Rainbow Skellums*, which will be released nationwide on December 24.



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Kevin Ehrenreich and Louw Venter are pictured with one of their victims from the new candid camera film, *Rainbow Skellums*.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Kevin Ehrenreich and Louw Venter with another of their victims.

ESTELLE SINKINS

IT'S been many years since Andre Scholtz filmed a candid camera film in South Africa, but the three actors who star in his latest project, *Rainbow Skellums*, believe it's high time South Africans had a good laugh at themselves.

Scholtz, who has worked with Leon Schuster in the past, set up cameras in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Heidelberg, Ventersdorp, Strand, Cape Town, Eersterivier and Gordon's Bay, where his three "skellums" — Kevin Ehrenreich, Alexa Strachan and Louw Venter — tried to catch out their victims. The results of their efforts will be screened nationwide from December 24.

Ehrenreich, Strachan and Venter were all newcomers to the candid camera format, something they found challenging.

"With candid camera you have to think on your feet, you have to read your victims very well and use your expressions to your best advantage," says Ehrenreich, best-known for his *Gatapie* comedy dramas.

Recalling one scene in *Rainbow Skellums*, where he acts as a taxi-driver who weighs his passengers before they commute in Eersterivier, he said: "To tell the truth, I was very nervous, because some of those aunties have very big biceps and I was so scared they were going to hit me!"

Strachan (whose credits include *African Diaries*, *Sandra op 'n Drafstap*, and *Kamp dit Uit met Mathys Roets* on KykNet) also found the medium a challenge, especially in a scene in which she plays a pregnant woman about to give birth when her drunken husband (played by Venter) orders a pizza.

"It's one of the most stressful things I've ever done. I gave birth to three children and believe me, it is no easy task to pretend that you are giving birth, especially when all the victims are experienced fathers and were with their wives in the labour ward. They started timing my contractions and everything."

Venter, who played Corne in the comedy series *The Most Amazing Show* and had cameo roles in the films *Bunny Chow* and *Straight out of Benoni*, agreed, adding: "You have to improvise and you totally depend on the reaction of the victim. No matter what plan of action you have in mind, there are no guarantees that it will work. You have to be on your toes at all times and immediately respond to the victim's reaction and impulses."

When making the film, Scholtz tried to include issues like bribery, corruption and security. Most of the gags in *Rainbow Skellums* come from his fertile brain, but he also used some of Ehrenreich's ideas and a few skits he and Schuster never filmed.

Ehrenreich, whose credits also include the kykNET documentary series *Agter die Mynhoop*, which reflected the lifestyle and culture of the coloured community, loved every minute of filming and didn't want it to stop. "Every day I wished the next day would come quickly so I could do more gags. I kept asking Andre if we could carry on filming because I was enjoying it so much," Ehrenreich said.

Asked why she thinks people love watching candid camera skits, Strachan said: "Because it's real. They can relate to the situations, especially so in this film because Andre has chosen to show things like corruption, the effect of name changing in towns. I also think South Africans like to laugh. And, let's face it, we all need to laugh in SA." Venter agrees, adding: "There are no Brads and Angelinas in this kind of film. But people watch them because of the potential of seeing themselves on screen. The film is about people, ordinary people."

So why should people go along and see *Rainbow Skellums*? "Because it really is a lot of fun," Venter replies. "And after the darkest year in human history we can all do with sitting back and having a good laugh."

Andre Scholtz is aiming to get you to laugh your way to the box office and back with a new raft of pranks.

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