

Mansfield real estate agent scouts for Scorsese film

BY MICHAEL GELBWASSER SUN CHRONICLE STAFF, Monday, February 25, 2008 11:48 PM EST



MANSFIELD - The last thing that Martin Scorsese wants to see in his new film is Leonardo DiCaprio jumping into a lake - and landing in weeds. So Mansfield real estate agent Scott Freerksen is helping the famed director find a good location, location, location.

Mansfield real estate agent Scott Freerksen, standing on his deck overlooking Bungay Lake, has been scouring Massachusetts for lakefront sites appropriate for director Martin Scorsese's new film "Ashcliffe." (Staff photo by TOM MAGUIRE)

Paramount Pictures location scouts have Freerksen looking for private local lakefronts for "Ashcliffe," a new drama that Scorsese starts shooting this spring. Based on the book "Shutter Island," by Dennis Lehane, the film is set in Massachusetts in the 1950s and stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Ben Kingsley. Several scenes feature a private lakefront with an older cottage.

Known to his clients as "The Lake Guy" because he sells only lakefront property, Freerksen said Monday he has taken Paramount scouts to a half-dozen sites in Southeastern Massachusetts within 40 miles of Boston, per Paramount's request, over the past five weeks. And then they departed.

Freerksen said an agreement with Paramount prevents him from identifying those locations. The scouts found his MassLakes.com site by Googling. Now they talk to him at least twice a week. And he's still searching for other options. "Supposedly, Martin is coming out next week and he's going to review those sites," said Freerksen, who grew up on Bungay Lake and now lives three doors down from his childhood home.

"I'm hoping that one of these will get chosen." Paramount isn't paying Freerksen for his effort. He figures he has spent around 30 hours, between research and site visits. "I'm just hoping to get invited to the set," Freerksen said.

Freerksen invited the scouts to about six sites, divided about equally among property for sale, private estates not for sale, and public parks along lakefronts. He picked the locations based on the scouts' parameters. Scorsese wants a site within 40 miles of Boston, where the film will be based, Freerksen said.

Privacy was critical. "They couldn't be in the middle of a shoot and have ski boats whizzing by," said Freerksen, a Realtor for Realty Executives Lioce Properties. The lake itself was another factor.

Some lakes start growing weeds in May and June because they're man-made, he said. That's especially important to one scene, in which DiCaprio "sees something floating in the lake," runs out of the cottage and dives into the water after it, Freerksen said. "They can't have Leonardo DiCaprio jumping into a big pile of weeds," he said.

One scout "took 300 to 400 shots" of one location so that Scorsese could see it from different angles, he said. "She seemed to very much know what Martin would be looking for," Freerksen said. As a fan, Freerksen, too, is familiar with Scorsese's perspective. "I primarily like how his stories flow. I like his character development," the real estate agent said.

Freerksen acknowledged this latest development will be "good exposure" for his business. And it could help one of his clients. "Who wouldn't want Leonardo DiCaprio in your house? That's a nice thing to say when you've got to sell it," he said.