



Baker City Herald/S. John Collins

Collin Clifford, left, plays the hero against villain Ammona Cunningham in a short film by Joseph Nelson about a young boy's imagination.

## Action!

Powder Valley grad Joseph Nelson filming a movie here

By LISA BRITTON  
Baker City Herald

Madi Oldroyd perches on the rock, her wrists bound in thick rope and her face a perfect picture of boredom. Suddenly the hero sprints into the frame, glancing at foot off a cottonwood tree and landing in fighting stance to take on the villain who tied up the Fair Maiden.

Camerman Thor Wixom captures the action with his fancy Red One camera, which is connected to a nearby screen where Director Joseph Nelson is watching with a smile on his face.

"I get to stand in front of this screen and watch my imagination come to life," he says.

Nelson, who graduated from Powder Valley High School in 2001, is busy this week filming a short he's titled "Then I Shall Reign Supreme."

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Joseph Nelson brings his fantasy adventure to the green forest around the Elkhorn Wildlife Area.

## Movie:

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Local scenes were shot near the Elkhorn Wildlife Area west of North Powder. Nelson's plan is to finish the film, a short about 7 to 10 minutes long, by September to enter it in the Sundance Film Festival.

"Short films you do so, you can show you can direct a group of people," he said.

He has lots of help from his wife, Carrie, who is the producer, assistant director, and makeup artist. She also designed the costumes and drew the storyboards.

For the next year, he plans to circulate the short through film festivals around the world.

The next project he has in a mind is feature-length film — a science-fiction comedy — set in Baker City.

Nelson recently finished his studies at Eastern Oregon University with a degree in liberal arts with an emphasis in film.

Along the way, he took all the theater classes he could that would relate to filmmaking.



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The Fair Maiden of the tale, Madi Oldroyd, practices a few defensive moves with Collin Clifford prior to filming a scene.

*'It's very nostalgic to me — it's how I was as a child.'*

— Joseph Nelson, talking about his script

His senior thesis was "How to make a movie on a low budget."

He wrote the script for "Then I Shall Reign Supreme" two years ago, and attempted to cast it last year in La Grande as a school project.

The auditions were quiet. "Two people showed up for a cast of seven," he said.

This year he headed to the Salt Lake City/Provo, Utah, area and found a full cast, including two martial arts experts to play the hero and villain.

Collin Clifford, 25, just graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in psychology. He plays the hero.

"They just wanted me for fighting," he said with a smile. Ammona Cunningham, 22, plays the villain.

Oldroyd, 16, is the Fair Maiden. Prior to this, she said she worked on a feature film.

The story revolves around a little boy who, with his imagination, can turn a pair of sticks and a backyard into

swords and an enchanted forest.

He play-fights with his buddy, whose little sister becomes the reluctant fair maiden who must be rescued.

As the little boys begin clashing sticks, the scene cuts to medieval times where the grownups use swords and the woman to be rescued is just as unimpressed.

"It's very nostalgic to me — it's how I was as a child," Nelson said.

Though the actors have been ready for a while, it takes time to set up a scene with the camera and sound and lighting just perfect.

"This is filmmaking — standing around being bored," Nelson said.

But it's a busy kind of bored — while an actor might be munching a bagel for a quick lunch, Nicole Bowman and John Moore are throwing tarps over the electronics to ward off the raindrops.



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Joseph Nelson, right, prepares for action during the recording of his short film titled, "Then I Shall Reign Supreme." Nelson is a 2001 Powder Valley High School graduate who brought his cast and crew to the Elkhorn Wildlife Area northwest of Haines Wednesday. In background are crew members John Moore handling sound and cameraman Thor Wixom.

Nearby Wixom, the cameraman, works to get in perfect position.

He uses a Red One camera, the same type being used to film "Pirates of the Caribbean 4."

Nelson said director Peter Jackson also uses this particular camera.

"If it's good enough for Peter Jackson, it's good enough for me," Nelson said.

Even facing all the film fea-

tivals he plans to enter, Nelson is really hoping to impress his 4-year-old son.

"One of my main goals with this movie is that he'll actually want to watch it. He likes swordfights."