

Talk of the Town

A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a blue checkered suit jacket over a purple and white patterned tie and a light-colored striped shirt. He is smoking a cigar and holding a glass of red wine. The background is dark with smoke rising from the cigar.

FALL 2013

A Gentlemen's Guide

IS SHE INTO ME?

6 ways to know
when she's NOT

LOUD AND SEXY

Denon's headphones
are music to our ears

FOOTBALL IS BACK!

Why Jets fans aren't happy

NEW BEGINNINGS

The Ryland Inn's triumphant return

NORTON HERRICK

Entertaining the Possibilities

WRITTEN BY JUSTIN DAVIDSON



The man, his plans and the growing diversity of his ever-expanding empire

Through hard work and a drive to do right by others, Brooklyn native Norton Herrick worked his way up to chairman and CEO of The Herrick Company, a major real estate investment company that oversees billions of dollars worth of transactions. Recently, Herrick has expanded his empire, and has begun producing major Hollywood films. Broadway shows, television and thoroughbred racing are some of his other passions, and he is finding success there as well. *Talk of the Town* chatted with Mr. Herrick about some of his current projects and his gift for getting the job done right.

It's been quite a year for you. Recently, 2 Guns featuring Mark Wahlberg and Denzel Washington, debuted at number one at the box office. As the producer, how thrilled were you with the strong opening?

It was great. Close to a \$30 million box office opening for the weekend and being number one, it is obviously what you want. It's still going strong, and hopefully it will end up with close to \$100 million box of-

fice at the end of the day. When you have Mark Wahlberg and Denzel Washington in an action film comedy—it's kind of an action and comedy—the synergies between them were incredible. It was like they were born to do this movie. They had [Balthasar Kormakur] the director, who was great. The producer was Marc Platt, who also produced *Wicked*. He's a great producer. Everything was perfect for this film to succeed.

What went through your mind when you first saw the 2 Guns script?

Absolute winner. Particularly when I read it, and we knew, at the time when I got it, Denzel Washington and Mark Wahlberg were attached as well as Balthasar Kormakur and Marc Platt, so it was an easy call for me to write the check.

What was it like working with these two heavyweight actors?

The cooperation was amazing between them, the director and the producers. Everybody worked together. It was just great. No issues

or problems at all, ever.

You have another movie project with Mark Wahlberg, Lone Survivor, which is slated to come out soon. Tell us about that.

The story is about four Navy Seals going up in the mountains of Afghanistan fighting 200 Taliban, and basically, as the name goes, only one survived. It's a great, heartfelt story. Another action film. Mark did an incredible job... Universal has decided to put it on the Oscar path for Best Film, and I feel this will be nominated, and it would be great to win. To have a Tony, an Oscar, and my horse winning the Dubai Worldcup in the same year, what more would I want? There will be a small release in December, and then they'll put it out wide at the beginning of 2014.

Earlier this year, Very Good Girls, a coming-of-age film that you produced, premiered at Sundance. Starring Dakota Fanning, Elizabeth Olsen and Demi Moore, it's not 2 Guns. What was that experience like?

I was born in Brooklyn, and we shot

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the movie in Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan, so that was fun. Richard Dreyfuss is also in the movie, and he was born and raised in Brooklyn, so that just made it fun. They did a great job. It turned out to be a coming-of-age, heartfelt movie. We're not sure who will be distributing it yet. We're working on that. It's going to be PG-13. We did some testing on it, and young women love it; actually, women of all ages love it, and they'll bring the guys with them. The guys will enjoy it too.

Then there's Nightlight, a horror film. It seems you like all types of genres. Is there any you don't enjoy?

I'm just one of many who read the script. My three boys, they read scripts... We have several people read the scripts before we agree to anything. It's really not about what I like. It's about what we feel could be a wide-release and what the market would want. As long as it's tasteful... One of my sons has probably read every horror book, and seen every horror movie there is, and he loves

horror. So if we get a script that's a horror script, he reads it, and if he says, "This is going to work, Dad," then we'll do it.

What do you look for in a script?

It's not only about liking and loving the script. It's also about the marketing. We have marketing folks that have been around for a long time that read it, that make sure it's fit for, hopefully, a wide audience and if there's an audience for it. So of course the financial numbers and the talent are important. The first thing is liking the script, and the second thing is getting the right director and a strong director. Then you have the financials to consider.

You've also had Broadway success. In 2009, Hair won the Tony for Best Revival. Pippin did the same this past year, also taking home three other Tony Awards. Why do you think your projects have done so well?

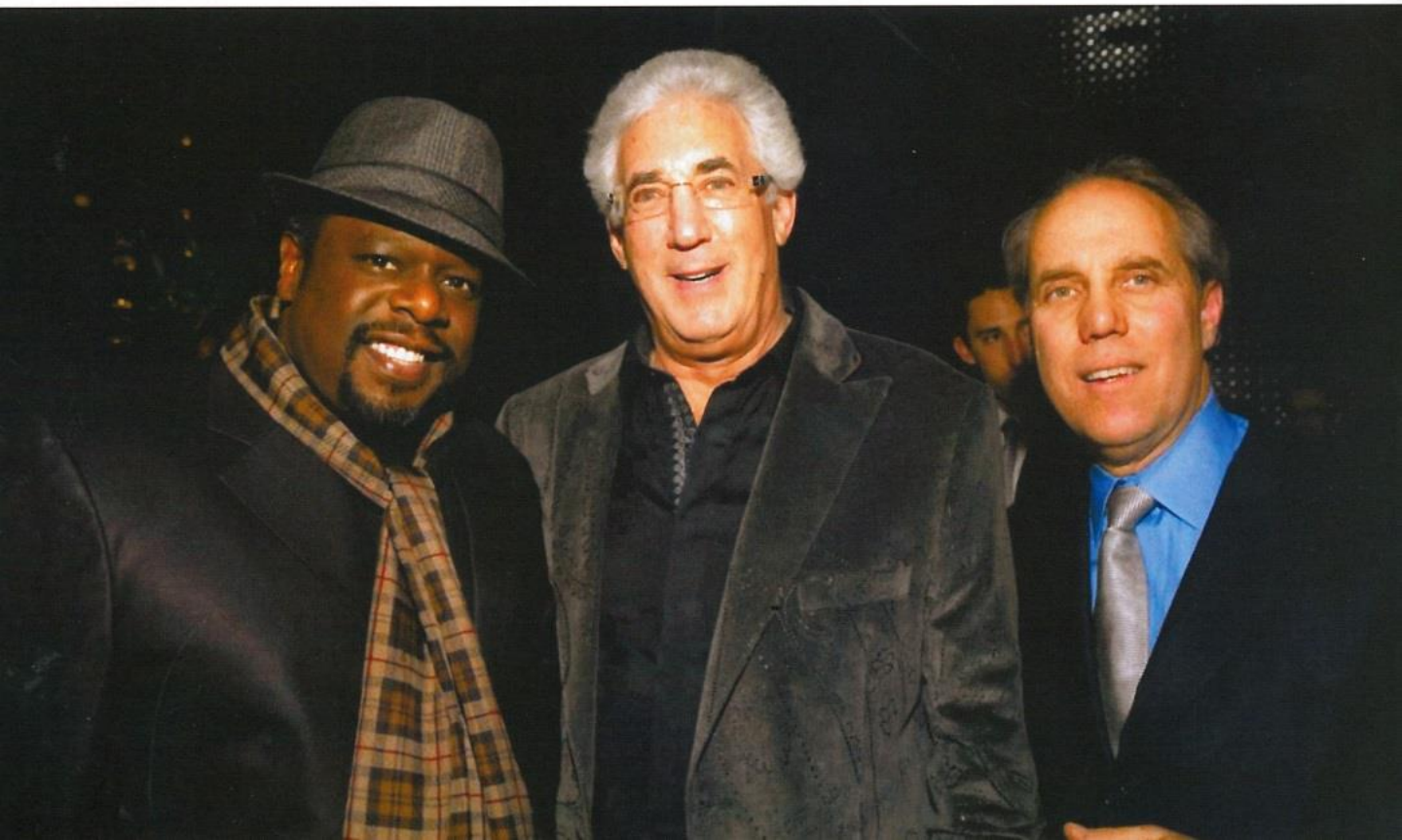
We have several people that are in my company or consult for us and

read the scripts, and they'll listen to the music if it's a musical. It's kind of like movies... You look for the right producer and the director... Barry Weissler did *Pippin*... and we have Diane Paulus directing. There's another one I'm working on with Barry right now that, hopefully, will get produced that Diane is directing. The key is the product as well as the director and the producer. After that comes bringing them in at a realistic cost so it makes financial sense.

Herrick Entertainment also is a prominent player in thoroughbred racing. Animal Kingdom won the Kentucky Derby in 2011, and then this past year, he won the World Cup in Dubai. How is putting out a successful horse similar to other entertainment areas in which you're involved?

Again, it's about that key person—the general partner who has been around horses his whole life. That's Barry Irwin. I'm a partner in Team Valor, and Barry Irwin is the general partner of Team Valor. He knows what to look for, and he knows what

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to pick, and I now have a good feel for it. One of my assistants has been around horses all her life, and she helps me with the selections. It's about breeding, and how fit the animal is, and the configuration of the animal, and Barry Irwin is great at that. It's all about people. Every business is about management and picking the right people and I've been fortunate to have been able to do that.

The Herrick Company, your real estate investment firm, has completed billions of dollars of property transactions. Where would you say your business savvy comes from?

(laughs) I don't know. I guess my dad and mom who were both very business savvy and worked hard all their lives. I've been working since I was 14 years old. Every summer, every vacation, I was always working. That was the case in grammar school, high school and college... I was always entrepreneurial. When I was a water boy on a construction job, I ended up selling sodas. Through college I had several jobs. I guess I just have a good feel for things. Probably a lot of experience and losing money early on. When you're losing money, you learn real quick.

Your company has offices all over the East Coast: New Jersey, Florida, Connecticut and New Hampshire. How do you get around, and do you ever sleep?

It's funny you say that. I'm for sure a workaholic. I work 24/7, pretty much. I enjoy what I do... If I'm bored, it's not for long. I'll move on and we'll go into another business or do something else, and try to do some fun things, and some green projects, which we've done. We built a power plant fueled by turkey manure about

five years ago. It's the largest one in the world, the first one in America. It's in Benson, Minnesota... It's a green plant that solves an environmental problem for the turkey farmers that have to get rid of the turkey manure and it is clean burning. They're financially smart as well as feel-good projects.

Describe your mindset when it comes to humanitarian causes.

It's just something my family has always done, and I just feel it's something one needs to do. Once you and your family are provided for, you should give back. That's what life is all about. We had an extensive library of movies from the Golden Age of film, which we donated to the University of Miami for its film school. We also made a generous gift to The Hebrew University in Jerusalem where we have a cousin who works in cancer research. He's a world-renowned and award-winning scientist who studies DNA methylation, which deals with how gene expression determines cancer. The funds donated support this cutting edge genetic and cancer research. We just try to find the right places to be productive and helpful for the world.

Who or what inspires you?

My dad died at 48 years old, but he always worked hard and would always do the right thing. He was always kind to people, even though we weren't wealthy when I was younger. But we did OK, and he was always there for people. If somebody needed a few dollars, he was always there giving it to them. I think that's why I've always worked hard—to prove to him that I'm a good son; I always wanted to accomplish things for him to be proud of me.

Any other projects down the road we can look forward to?

We have partners in probably 15 to 20 horses now, so we're always hopeful we'll have a good one. I'm looking forward to doing a show called *Waitress* that Diane Paulus will be directing. I'll be involved in taking *Spider-man* on a world tour. As far as movies, I'm working on a five-picture slate deal, which I really can't tell you too much about with a famous London writer-producer-director. We'll be producing and financing. There's always real estate projects going on—working on buying an existing hotel deal in South Florida, an office building in New York, about 50 retail stores around the country. There's always real estate deals happening here.