

24

hours

24hrs.ca

Kelly to pose?

■ Singer Kelly Rowland may be planning to pose nude in *Playboy*, say some media reports. **P. 2**



No huge changes

■ Matt Pettinger is the newest Canuck after forward Matt Cooke was traded to the Washington Capitals. **P. 14**



Please recycle this paper.
with other household waste.

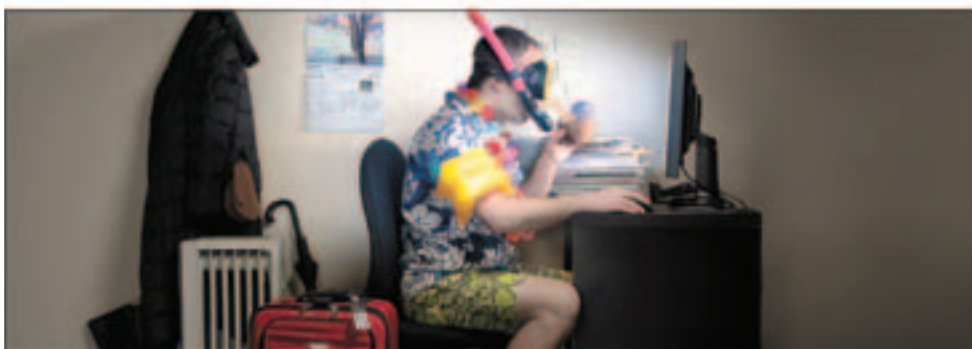


Eva gets real

Hollywood A-lister Eva Mendes was in town last August to shoot an episode of *4REAL*, the brainchild of two local social entrepreneurs who use star power to highlight people effecting real change in the world. **P. 4**

- Jade Thome, special to 24 hours
Actress Eva Mendes serves some soup in the Downtown Eastside while filming an episode of *4REAL*, a locally produced series that takes celebrity guests on worldwide adventures to connect with young leaders who share a drive and passion for making a difference in the world. The show previews next month on CTV.

Proprietor and Publisher: Sun Media Corporation – 554 East 15th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5T 2R5



Your dream vacation only takes a click.



RELAX. WE'VE GOT IT COVERED.

'Celebrities are at the pinnacle of the cultural pyramid, but in our mind, these young leaders are the ones who are really doing something for the world.'



Sol Guy, Cameron Diaz and medicine man Puma Singona visit Machu Picchu in Mexico.



Chief Tashka Yawanawa (centre) welcomes actor Joaquin Phoenix and Sol Guy to his community.



Somali-Canadian hip-hop star K'naan, left, in Kenya with leader Salim Mohamed, co-founder of Carolina for Kibera.

- photos by Jade Thome

One camera, two men, big difference

Eva Mendes scours a dimly lit Downtown Eastside alley for used needles. Cameron Diaz treks into Peru's Andes mountains to meet a medicine man. Joaquin Phoenix heads deep into the heart of the Amazon Rainforest and encounters an indigenous tribe, while Somali-Canadian hip-hop star K'naan explores the largest slum in East Africa.

While the stars in this ensemble could each be researching their roles in the latest multi-layered Paul Haggis-directed social commentary, the scenes are actually from the TV series *4REAL*, and the drama and inspirational characters they confront along the way are real.

Created by Vancouver's Sol Guy and Josh Thome, the series (hosted by Guy) takes celebrity guests on adventures around the globe to connect with young leaders who share the drive and passion for effecting real change in the world.

"We all wake up to challenges," says Thome, sitting next to Guy in a coffee shop just a stone's throw from their Vancouver office. "But different places, different languages, different issues, these leaders are all the same. They all have this quality with how they're approaching the challenges, and that kind of transcends it. These people are dealing with crazy situations and are rocking it in the most amazing ways."

Mendes is collecting needles with Liz Evans, executive director and founder of the PHS Community Services Society, an organization that, since 1993, has provided housing, advocacy and support to the Downtown Eastside community.

Diaz is meeting with Puma Singona, a young medicine man from the Quechua tribe who is striving to keep their ancient knowledge and wisdom alive.

Phoenix meets the Yawanawa tribe, whose fortunes seem to be on the rise under the leadership of Chief Tashka and Laura Yawanawa.

And K'naan travels back to Africa, where he hooks up with Salim Mohamed, who operates a medical clinic and a soccer program for more than 4,000 kids living in a Kenyan slum.

The sights and sounds from the show seem worlds away from B.C.'s Kootenay mountains, where childhood friends Thome and Guy grew up.

"Our parents were original back-to-the-land hippies," says Thome. "As kids, we grew up with very little material wealth, no television, not even electricity or running water. My family's mode of transportation was by horse."

Guy says that being the only black family in the mountains made it difficult to figure out how he fit in. After high school, when Thome headed for California to pursue environmental education, Guy moved to Vancouver: "I found a whole

diverse community of people connected by hip-hop culture. That was it for me. I was hip hop. Hip hop was for me."

Guy and some friends formed hip-hop act the Rascalz. He launched his own independent record label, and eventually landed in New York as international director of artist development for Arista Records.

Then, in 2001, he went to Sierra Leone with the Rascalz to take part in a documentary about its nine-year civil war, an experience he says contrasted harshly with the "bling bling" of mainstream hip hop.

It was an experience that would change his life.

"People were covered with diamonds, and I had just held a six-month-old baby who had lost her arm over diamonds," he says. "The culture I loved had become completely disconnected from its roots. I knew I couldn't continue on as usual with what I was doing."

Guy reconnected with Thome that same year. Thome had been pursuing environmental advocacy and through the years had received the Sierra Club President's Award for his work.

He'd also formed the Student Action Network and his first video, *CONNECT*, hosted by R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe, featured Thome interviewing outstanding young leaders around the world. The video was broadcast worldwide as part of MTV's Earth Day special in 1996, sowing the seed for what would become *4REAL*.

Following their reunion in New York, Guy and Thome spent three years traveling, meeting and filming various young leaders and developing the show. Their collected footage inspired local writer-director-producer Chris Haddock (*Intelligence*) to sign on as executive producer of the series.

Actor Joaquin Phoenix also signed on as an executive producer after wrapping the filming of the first episode.

"Joaquin had an amazing trip," says Guy. "He started spreading the word and making calls for us. He told Flea [Red Hot Chili Peppers] about it, and Josh went to see Flea when he was in Vancouver and he said, 'Yeah, cool.'"

Clearly, Guy and Thome's passion for the project is contagious, and that enthusiasm convinced their broadcasting partners to split profits from the show with the young leaders featured in it.

"Celebrities are at the pinnacle of the cultural pyramid," says Thome, "but in our mind, these young leaders are the ones who are really doing something for the world."

Adds Guy: "People-to-people interaction is powerful stuff. You know, one of the guys

down here in the Downtown Eastside said to us, 'Hey, man, we want a hand up, not a handout.' And it's just real."

Preview episodes of *4REAL* air on CTV in March, with the eight-episode first season slated to premiere on MTV in Canada in April. It will also be broadcast around the world on the National Geographic Channels International.

Visit www.4real.com to find out more about the show.

Graeme McRanor, 24 hours

Josh Thome is one of the brains behind the scenes of *4REAL*, a TV series that illustrates world issues with the help of A-list celebrities.



Sol Guy recently won the 2008 National Geographic Emerging Explorers Award with partner Josh Thome for their work on *4REAL*.

