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## Robert W. Butler

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### Creators of 'Fling' have a dream-job debut

John Stewart Muller and Laura Boersma are happy to be back in Kansas City showing off their new baby.

Not that kind of baby.

In the summer of '07 the pair shot a movie here. "Fling" — it was originally called "Lie to Me" — is a romantic drama about a group of 20-something friends, especially a couple (played by newcomers Courtney Ford and Steve Sandvoss) whose "open" relationship is threatened when they find themselves falling for other people.

"Fling" will enjoy its first commercial run anywhere when it opens Friday at the Screenland Crossroads at 17th and Washington. Muller and Boersma (he directs, she produces, and they collaborated on the screenplay) will be on hand all weekend to greet audiences and discuss the making of the movie.

Several cast members, including Brandon Routh, will be here as well. Routh is best known for starring in "Superman Returns" and is a producer of "Fling."

Most first-time filmmakers would opt for something tried and true. Maybe horror or raunchy comedy.

But Muller (a Kansas City native) and Boersma went for something more complicated: a relationship movie.

"We talked about doing a genre film," Boersma, 30, said. "They're more marketable. But making money wasn't the big goal. That would be awesome, sure, but we wanted to make a show piece that would prove what we can do."

"It's like our calling card," added Muller, 31. "We decided we wanted to write about something we knew. The film was inspired by some of our experiences and those of our friends. There have been lots of movies about people who cheat and lie about it ... this one is about people who have affairs and *don't* lie to each other about it.

"It's like having your cake and eating it, too."

"Except," Boersma interjected, "human nature tends to mess things up."

"It's a movie about growing up," Muller said.

"And it's about testing the limits and rewriting the rules," Boersma said.

"So many love stories are about meeting and falling in love," Muller added. "This one is about what happens *after* those movies end."

The couple wrote the script two years ago, setting it in Kansas City.

"When we started shopping it around it seemed like it might be more viable to shoot in L.A.," Muller said. "The actors and crews are already there. But the problem is that L.A. is L.A. ... it's too easy to look at these characters in L.A. and dismiss them as just crazy, eccentric West Coast types. You know, 'All the people out there behave like that.'"

"It's different when these characters live in the Midwest."

Among the recognizable Kansas City area locations in the movie are the Elms Hotel in Excelsior Springs, Crown Center, the Crossroads District on a First Friday and Washington Park.

Boersma, who grew up in various cities on the West Coast, said she's now tempted to claim KC as her hometown. "Our experience here was so good ... and I love the whole feel of this place."

"Fling" has played at film festivals in Los Angeles and Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The DVD will be released next spring by Peace Arch Entertainment.

In the meantime Muller and Boersma are self-distributing the film to theaters.

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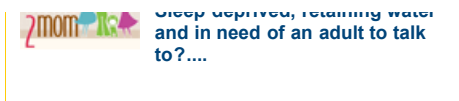
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"We're approaching these theatrical runs as mini-events ... we'll do something in Des Moines for Brandon — that's his hometown — and in Denver, where Nick Urata, our composer, comes from and has a huge following."

And the pair are already thinking about their next project. One possibility is "Frosh," about freshman cheerleaders who find themselves pushed into the spotlight when the junior-senior squad goes on strike for new uniforms. Another is inspired by *Loving the Single Man*, a '70s guide to seducing men. Both films would be comedies.

"This is a dream job, the coolest thing ever," Boersma said of making movies. "It's like we're always asking ourselves, 'When are they going to find out that we're frauds?'"

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