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## CALIENTE

### Local scene : Driver for the stars keeps film crews moving

By Phil Villarreal

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When Mack Matlock retired as a Pima County sheriff's deputy 12 years ago, he transformed into a movie-set driver.

"It's really stressful. You have schedules to meet, and a lot of money depends on you meeting the schedule," he said.

Matlock was a driver on the production of "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" when the action film was shot at Tucson International Airport and the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group, known as the Boneyard. The film will open Wednesday.

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Matlock shuttled crew members back and forth from the sets to the Desert Diamond Casino and Hotel, where they stayed.

Matlock, who was born in Douglas and lives in Sonoita with his wife, Kitt, said he plans to see the film with his three grandsons sometime this summer. He'll be in Lake Havasu City until July 2, working on "Piranha 3-D," which stars Jerry O'Connell and Elisabeth Shue.

Matlock, 62, worked as a security guard on "Cannonball Run II" (1984), which was partially shot in the Tucson area. He landed similar gigs on other Arizona productions,

including the "Young Riders" TV show, "Tombstone," "Tin Cup," "Planet of the Apes," "Evolution" and "Away We Go."

What was special about the "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" shoot?

"There were lots more specialty cars and a lot of what we call 'picture cars' — cars that are used in the film."

Did you get to drive the picture cars?

"No. They have a specialty crew driving those. Picture cars are tricked out in a lot of different ways. . . . I saw Mini Coopers out there racing around the airplane graveyards."

How did you become a set driver?

"I've been in the business all my life, off and on. This is a good retirement job. I got into the Teamsters here."

Have you ever worked closely with celebrities on a film?

"I think the greatest scenario was I was able to do security for the Rat Pack (in "Cannonball Run II") — Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra and their entourage. I was working regular security, doing something else, and they told me they needed support for 'Cannonball.' "

What were the Rat Pack guys like?

"They were cool; they were fun and good-hearted guys. They were from the old-time film-business culture."

Did they do a lot of drinking?

"Not so much. Not really. But they had their times. They were all about fun. . . . Dean Martin was funny all the time. He never changed. That's just the way he was. He

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Mack Matlock takes a break from the stress of being a movie-set driver.

COURTESY OF MACK MATLOCK

#### Opening Wednesday

"Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" opens Wednesday. Read the review in next week's Caliente.

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cracked jokes about me, and said, 'Oh, Johnny Law.' He was just a fun guy to be around. There was a lighthearted air about him."

How long were your days on "Transformers"?

"Oh, we'd start at 5 or 5:30 a.m. and end around 8 or 8:30 (p.m.). With overtime and stuff, I earned about \$3,500 or \$4,500 for the week."

How much driving work do you get a year?

"It depends on how good the business is in Arizona. This year it's fairly good. I imagine this year I'll work six months. . . . You take what you can get. The money is so good it's really hard to refuse it."



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