

"Every time - 'I'll have a cup of delicious coffee' - that's all he says," reports Carla, an espresso-slinger at The Fyxx on Broadway, when the name Sean Garrity comes up. "I pour what I think is 'delicious' and then off he goes," she laughs.

The Fyxx is a favourite spot for Sean Garrity, intrepid Winnipeg-based filmmaker of *Inertia* (2001), *Lucid* (2005), and most recently, *Zooey & Adam* (2009), a guerrilla-style dramatic feature that's making waves here at home and in the US.

But the café's also a haunt for *Zooey & Adam*'s brave stars, local actors Daria Puttaert and Tom Keenan - both slung espresso here before leaping to the big screen.

Now, having unclamped his bike helmet, and nursing the day's cup of 'delicious' coffee, Sean reluctantly admits that, yes, it's he who's gettin' all the buzz.

Google Mr. Garrity and you'll find Q&A's, articles, and audio bytes aplenty in *The National Post*, *Uptown Magazine*, *NOW Magazine*, *eFilmCritic.com*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, *National Screen Institute*, *Times Colonist* ... you name it ... he's in it.

"It's a marketing thing," he divulges. "People aren't really interested in me. It's the way we market films in Canada. We send the director out and they talk about their movies."

Sean would rather let the real stars shine.

"In Hollywood they send out their stars, which is way smarter ... the actors are far more charismatic than I am, right?" he laughs. "And far more photogenic."

Lifted from a 3-page outline, created by improvising actors, and shot in Manitoba with a budget of zero, *Zooey & Adam* defies the airtight high-gloss standards set by the Hollywood machine.

"A profound collaboration allowed us to craft this thing," he affirms.

The raw documentary-styled drama has been playing festivals everywhere from Vancouver to San Francisco. And it's been lauded as everything from "brave and thought provoking" by the *Globe and Mail* to "raw, authentic, emotionally intense" by the *Toronto Sun*.

Top that up with its harrowing story of a couple ruined by rape and sordid pregnancy, and you've got hot debate. Some festivals even refused the film because it pushes too many buttons.

But, for Sean, it all comes with the territory.

"I didn't set out to make a controversial film," he explains. "It just ended up being controversial."

Home's Where the Art Is: Sean Garrity

By Ian Mozdzen

Spoken like a born traveller. The son of two teachers, Sean moved from school to school all over Manitoba in his youth.

"Home" for Sean could mean any number of places, including Charleswood or even in an experimental town outside Brandon designed in the 1970s for Aboriginals transitioning from reserve to big city living.

"They called it The Centre or The Base or Oo-Za-We-Kwun, which is Cree for 'Yellowquill,'" he recalls and then shrugs. "The town ended in scandal ... It's a llama and sheep farm now."

Then, at 18, Sean took his big leap, skipping town and heading to India.

"That was HYPER!" he exclaims. "Every 10 kilometers the language changes, the food changes, everything changes."

His adventure would also take him to Argentina and Japan, not to mention all over Canada as well.

"I've bounced around a lot," he confirms. "I'm addicted to backpacking."

Yet the road would lead straight back home for the artist.

"There was this one point where I was out with these friends, all the Argentineans," Sean chuckles, "and I felt that I was really 'in,' you know. But this guy started to sing songs that I didn't know

... and the Argentinians all sang along ... and I had no idea what the songs were."

Then came a realization: "If I want to make meaningful art, then I should go back to where I am from."

With award-winning features, documentaries, and short films now under his belt, Sean can rest assured that it all was well worth the trip.

But he's still on the go - with several projects, that is. And the one he's got his sights on is a 180-degree turn from *Zooey & Adam*.

"It's this big broad comedy called *Shed Devil*," Sean announces smirking.

Made in collaboration with *Inertia*'s producer Brendon Sawatzky, *Shed Devil* shows the high jinks that ensue when a man vowing to be good to everyone - that's right, everyone - gets what's comin'.

What else but the Good Samaritan's ultimate conundrum? Satan, the horned hellion himself, is in a lurch and needs a helping hand.

Since *Shed Devil* is slotted to shoot in the Whiteshell, looks like it's on the road again for Mr. Garrity.

On that note, the filmmaker sips the last of his delicious coffee, fits the bike helmet, and cycles off into the day.