

## AZ Insider: Did Cuba Gooding Jr. Endorse a Hit Man in Scottsdale?

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"The AZ Insider" with Kathy Shayna Shocket: Get the inside scoop on Arizona's social scene and celebrity news.



### Also, why was Phoenix Suns Grant Hill was on the red carpet with Cuba?

Why in the world would Oscar winning actor **Cuba Gooding Jr.** endorse a hit man in Scottsdale? Because it was all part of the Phoenix Film Festival and Cuba was at the Scottsdale Harkins 101 talking about his career and his new film "Hit List".

Cuba and **Cole Hauser** star in the indie action-thriller. You see the storyline unfolds when a man in a bar confides his problems to a stranger (Gooding) and gives the stranger a list of the five people he'd like to see dead. Then, the people on his list begin turning up dead.

"A Conversation with Cuba Gooding Jr." was one of the featured events at the Phoenix Film Festival, now in its 11th year. Moviegoers watched a short presentation about the actor who won an Oscar for his portrayal of the charmingly arrogant pro football player, **Rod Tidwell**, in *Jerry Maguire*, starring opposite **Tom Cruise** and then had the chance to hear from the actor himself.



*Cuba Gooding Jr. with Phoenix Suns Grant Hill*

Cuba also mingled (and was dwarfed in size) at the festival's pre-party with Phoenix Suns **Grant Hill**. Like Phoenix Suns player **Steve Nash**, Grant has turned filmmaker.

In fact, his movie "Starting at the Finish Line" was the festival's opening night premiere event. The VIPs in attendance? Legendary Duke Track Coach **Al Buehler** was at the film's debut screening. His life and struggle fighting a brain tumor is the center of the documentary film.

As the Track & Field Coach at Duke University for 55 years, he has coached and inspired such Olympians as **Jackie Joyner-Kersey** and **Carl Lewis**, and such Duke icons as **Grant Hill**, Memphis Grizzlies **Shane Battier** and Duke Basketball coach **Mike Krzyzewski**.

Coach Buehler was also an inspirational sports history teacher who strongly impacted undergraduates such as Grant Hill and Grant's filmmaker partner **Amy Unell**. Buehler not only shaped the sports landscape through three Olympics and years of coaching at the school, but he was a champion of integration and women's athletics in the Atlantic Coast Conference long before it became fashionable.



Actor **Peter Weller** also turned out for the festival in Scottsdale. The actor best known for his sci-fi roles such as "Robocop" was presented with the Copper Wing Tribute Award.



**Kathy Shayna Shocket** is a Phoenix based writer. If you have a good item for The AZ Insider, you can email her at [redkarpetgirl@aol.com](mailto:redkarpetgirl@aol.com).