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## STRIKING GOLD

Imagination's recesses are fertile ground for award-winning writer

By **MARK EVANGELISTA**  
Chronicle correspondent

Deep in the shadowy lair of Kevin Coleman hang the tools of his trade: computer, whip, bomb.

While the last two items are props, the lifelong Memorial resident wields his computer as a weapon to escape imminent danger in the cliffhanger worlds he creates.

Coleman struck gold by winning the Gold Remi Award for the best screenplay at last month's WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival for Kokopelli.

"I never said to myself, 'I'm going to write a screenplay,'" Coleman said. "I never saw myself as a writer."

The judges at the Port Hueneme International Film Festival in California might be surprised by that comment since Coleman and his Kokopelli won the best screenplay honor at their Port Hueneme festival last year.

"People always saw me as a creative guy but not necessarily as a writer," he said.

The day job as a creative director and graphic artist in the advertising and marketing field for more than 20 years is a good cover. After all, Coleman, a former Memorial High



Memorial area resident Kevin Coleman talks expressively about his career and screenplay Kokopelli, which won an award for Best Screenplay at a recent film festival.

School student, graduated from the Art Institute of Houston in 1980. But late at night, after his wife Vivian and sons Blake and Brice are fast asleep, Coleman is on the prowl in his home office. He just doesn't find it there; he creates it.

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“Writing is my escape,” he said. “The tough part is finding time to do it. It’s not uncommon to find me sitting at my computer late at night when everyone’s asleep.”

But who could sleep while cutthroat conquistadors, mummies, mariachis, Gila monsters, a shaman, a snake-bitten wife and a lost temple of gold are thrashing about in your mosh pit of an imagination. These characters willingly went into Kokopelli, Coleman’s screenplay that shares the name of the popular humpbacked flute player of Native American legend.

Besides greed, the story focuses on Blake Hunter. His life is in ruins — of course, he’s an archeologist — when he’s approached by his former college professor who offers him the chance of a lifetime. The discovery of an old Spanish journal documents an ill-fated expedition by Coronado’s army to locate a rumored lost temple of gold.

While the professor mysteriously disappears, Hunter begins the search with his best friend and the prof’s beautiful daughter for the gold and her father.

Before you start yelling for Indy, the only thing that Steven Spielberg and George Lucas have in common with Coleman is the fact that

WorldFest, one of the largest and one of the oldest film festivals in the world, gave the Indiana Jones creators their first awards. Coleman contends that his passion for archeology came well before the hunt for the Ark of the Covenant began on film.

“My interest in archeology was sparked long before Indiana Jones hit the theaters and made it popular,” Coleman said. “What I find really amazing, is how many people have told me they thought there should be more films

of this genre, adventures that make you forget about your stressful day by sweeping you off to new and faraway places.”

Coleman is now pondering his next move with Kokopelli — whether to sell the script outright, be done with it and move on to the next story, or retain a more active role in producing the project.

“Looking back, at when I first began Kokopelli — from the research, the countless hours of writing, the contacts I’ve made, and now the honors I’ve received — this whole experience has been an adventure,” he said. “Just like the script itself.”

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**Kevin Coleman,**  
screenwriter

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