

Tahoe second homeowner still a force in Hollywood

By Carla Meyer, Sacramento Bee

There's no half way with Bruce Dern. It's why he's worked consistently in show business for 55 years.

Dern said he passed on his strategy to Will Forte one day on set of their acclaimed new film "Nebraska". Forte, who plays Dern's character's son, was battling an illness and struggling to get through the day's shoot. He turned to his resilient co-star, 34 years his senior, for coping advice.

"I told him, 'You want to give it all on every play,'" Dern said. "'You are here 24-7 for all of us. If I let down, or you let down, or any of us lets down, the movie suffers.'"

This approach extends to interviews as well. Reached by telephone in Los Angeles, Dern doesn't follow the question, answer, silence-in-between template of modern interviews. When he was coming up, stars engaged with the press.

Dern, 77, won the best-actor prize at May's Cannes Film Festival for his "Nebraska" performance, and he's on the short list for a lead-actor Academy Award nomination. He's glad to talk about his career resurgence, but he also asks questions, and tailors some responses for The Bee's local audience.

For nearly 25 years, Dern flew from Los Angeles to his second home on Fallen Leaf Lake so he could bet on sports, he said. Often, his flight would be diverted to Sacramento from Reno, and he would drive up Highway 50 to Lake Tahoe.

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