

MUG SHOTS



It has hosted hordes of hungover rockers looking for a breakfast special on the Sunset Strip. But it's also an amazing gallery of Hollywood 8x10s, marking a time gone by.

The classic black-and-white glossy headshot is dead, and its mausoleum is Duke's Coffee Shop on the Sunset Strip—not to mention countless dry cleaners and body shops scattered across Los Angeles.

Duke's walls are a timeline of the once ubiquitous symbol of showbiz, from Frank Sinatra in his Rat Pack suit to Stephen Baldwin with a dangle earring and three-day stubble. "I haven't had a new one in two years," says Beverly Pittman, manager and 30-year veteran of Duke's. "It's like they've stopped making them."

"I used to see 40 to 50 people a day come in to print up headshots," says a clerk at Nardulli, a Los Angeles printing company. "Now I get about four or five a day."

The digital revolution has forever altered the actor's first rite of initiation: scrutinizing the tiny images circled in grease pencil on a contact sheet for the weighty promise of a box of prints. Now these exist as simple "jpeg" files that litter computer desktops and inboxes instead of backseat floorboards and agency mailrooms.

"All of our submissions are electronic now," says Kerry Barden, a casting director whose credits include *Sex and the City*, *Good Will Hunting*, and *Chocolat*. "We only print them out if we need them for a casting meeting." Given the odds of the business, most of these digital headshots will likely never even see the light of a laser printer, let alone know the taste of emulsion.

Headshots have become as dated as Duke's pie domes and chocolate malts; as nostalgic as the old sign on the wall behind the counter that people like Jim Morrison and Andy Kaufman used to line up under decades ago—waiting like everyone else on busy come-down mornings outside the original Duke's in the Tropicana Hotel on Santa Monica Boulevard.

But although the 8x10 glossy has died by the hand of technology, people like Duke's Pittman, and the innumerable mechanics and dry cleaners of Hollywood, remain the saints that guard the thumbtack gates of headshot heaven. Hey, Travolta in "Sweat Hog" mode: Gabe Kaplan says, "Welcome back!"