

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Waterworld's Great Expense

In Universal Pictures' long-awaited summer movie "Waterworld", which opened in U.S. theaters Friday, Kevin Costner plays a mutant warrior who uses superhuman stunts in narrow escapes from death.

Costner, who is part man, part fish, emerges virtually unscathed in the movie, but in real life the brooding actor may not be as fortunate. With a budget of more than \$200 million and a tidal wave of negative publicity threatening to drown "Waterworld", experts say it will take more than a few last-minute heroics to keep the epic film afloat.

"The situation is this," said Jeffries & Co entertainment analyst Lee Isgur. "It's got to make a hell of a lot of money, and that's going to be tough."

In the months leading up to Friday's opening, "Waterworld" has been the subject of unprecedented pre-release attention, with some critics calling it "Fishtar" — a reference to the costly 1987 comedy flop "Ishtar" — or "Kevin's Gate".

For Costner, the criticism, which included reports of wild parties on the set, numerous diving injuries and expensive re-shoots, has been a shock.

"We've worked ourselves into a place where people can write about events before they see them, write about events that actually they don't even know, use sources close to the source supposedly and feel like it's the truth," he said in a recent interview. "There's a cynicism that exists in that and there's also a danger in that."

"Waterworld" started out as a \$100 million thriller in which the polar ice caps have melted and covered the earth with water. Costner, who plays an enigmatic mariner, sets out with a young girl and her adopted mother to find a mythical place called Dryland.

In the process, they are chased by Dennis Hopper and a rag-tag bunch of hoodlums who try to kidnap the girl, the only one who knows where Dryland is.

As production lagged, the film's costs continued to soar, triggering a wave of negative media reports. But Costner continues to defend the film's budget.

"This movie was embarrassingly expensive, but it was not overdone given what the circumstances were,"

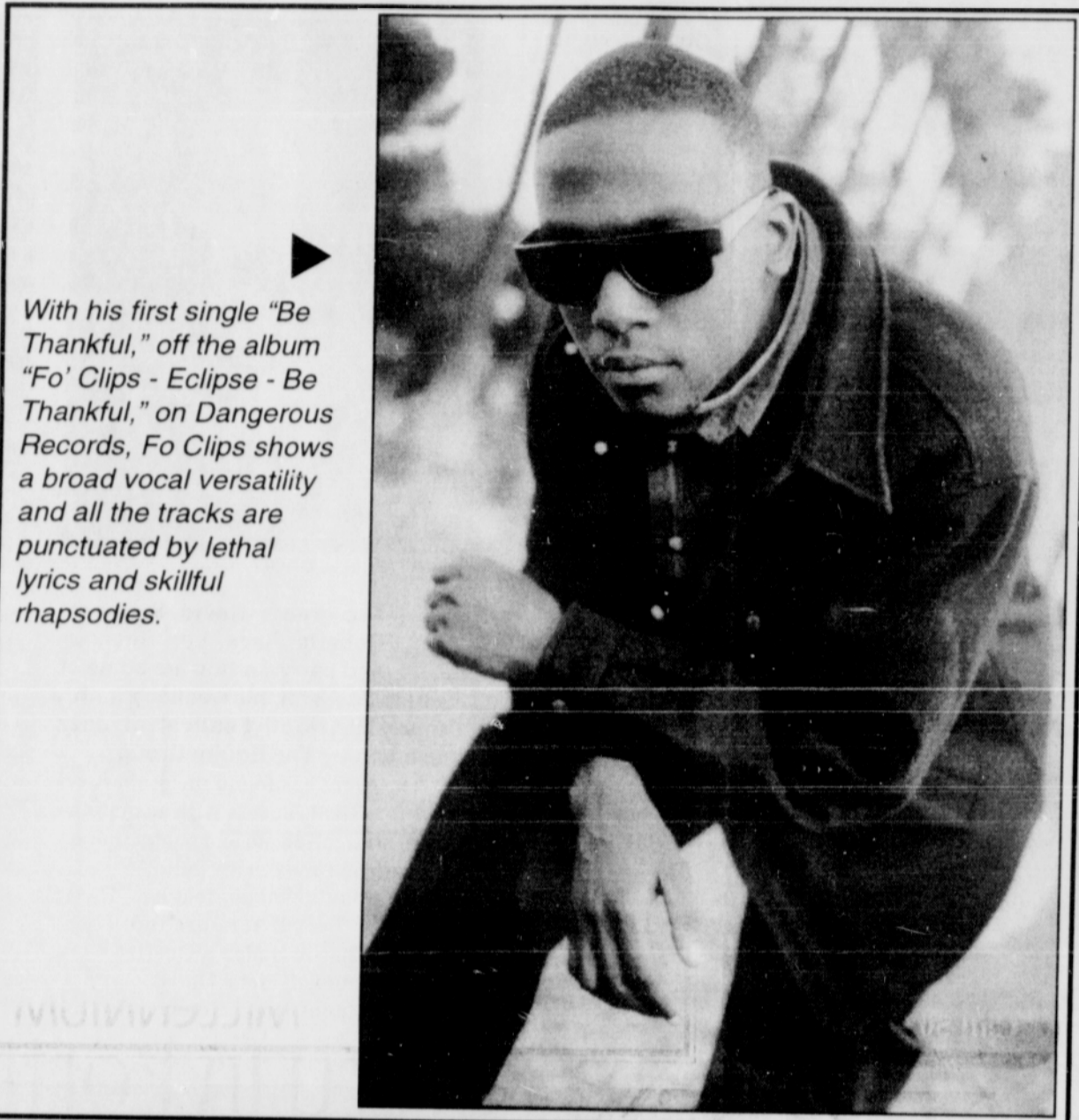
he said.

For starters, "Waterworld" was filmed almost entirely at sea, under difficult conditions. Camera crews

were often at odds with the elements.

The location, off the coast of Hawaii, meant material had to be shipped from the mainland.

Costner's vessel, a 60-foot trimaran, for example, was flown to the site on a 747 jumbo jet.



With his first single "Be Thankful," off the album "Fo' Clips - Eclipse - Be Thankful," on Dangerous Records, Fo Clips shows a broad vocal versatility and all the tracks are punctuated by lethal lyrics and skillful rhapsodies.

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For more information, call Julia at 274-9308.