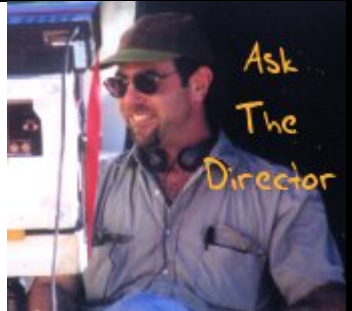


Josh Becker DGA

Directing From The Edge



Q & A Archive
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Name: John Forde
E-mail: jforde40@hotmail.com

Howdy Josh-

Hey Bill: To answer if I'm the "Mental" guy, all I can say is no. I am mental ward material, if that's what you mean.....

John "They're Coming to take me Away" Forde

Dear John:

I'm glad you could straighten that out.

Josh

Name: Dahlia Sweets
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

Do you still have a friendship with Rob Tapert? If not, I applaud you! In your answer to Alan you write "I don't watch the show, and I certainly won't be watching any from now on" in referring to JOAT. Has your association with Ren Pics affected your friendship with Bruce Campbell since he is part owner of Ren Pics?

I find it very sad that people fault you for following your dream. I guess they would find it harder to bash you if you had a couple blockbusters, and that says well of their characters judging people by the size of their wallets. I think it's a sad reflection of Xena and some of it's fans.

At least your episodes made me laugh. At least they were just mindless TV as TV should be. People should understand what a director does before they bash him. Afterall, you directed, you didn't write, star in, and produce.

You are right and Xena won't be remembered, and when someone with the guts to put on a show about a strong female Warrior with out the sterotypical lesbian shtick gets a show aired, Xena will be a forgotten memory. Xena has it because the Taperts pander to it, and it's ruined the show. Yah, it still goes on, it still makes money, doesn't mean it's any good. A hero going on adventures is what Xena ought to be, not an acid religious trip with storylines altered and twisted because of subtext. I mean Callisto the father? Too much sense for Robbie to go with a man as the father?

I want to watch TV, I don't want it leaping out at me telling me I have to applaud it and think it's the greatest thing since sliced bread. Xena is too full of itself. A problem of it's producer and actors perpetuating it.

I wish you would tell what you really think of Xena and the way they do business over there at Ren Pics. It's not my business, but I sure would like to know what a guy like you thinks of the whole Xena mess. Anyway, Good Luck on your future projects.

Dahlia Sweets
Ex-Xena Fan

Dear Dahlia:

Actually, Bruce isn't part of Ren Pix. He was originally, but quit soon after "ED 2." Bruce and I get along fine. Rob is a rich, powerful guy and it's a corrupting force and almost no one is exempt. Rob, the Great White Shark, thinks of me as little sucker fish (his metaphor) stuck onto his back. He thinks that every job I've ever done for him has been a personal favor to me, even though I got no more than the minimum and someone was going to have to do it. The fallacy of the Great White Shark is that it believes a Great White Shark has anymore value in the scheme of life than a sucker fish, which, of course, it does not.

Josh

Name: Tanya
E-mail:

Dear Josh,

Would it be a comedy?

Thanks,
Tanya

Dear Tanya:

The first 30 minutes would be a slapstick comedy, then the next 23 1/2 hours would be a horror film as the four women try to escape the room where my dead body lies rotting.

Josh

Name: Lou Goldberg
E-mail: louisg@umich.edu

Dear Josh:

Hey, I don't know if you'll remember me but I met you a few times some 20 years ago back when you Sam, Bruce, Rob, and Scott had offices in Ferndale. I chanced on to your web site and thought I'd say hi.

I saw Lunatics-A Love Story and thought it was great--very funny, very entertaining. I've seen Ted in all kinds of things but this is his best performance.

I still watch a lot of movies but never pursued movies as a career. If you see Ted tell him hi from me, John Arno, and Rich Hayes--we all remember him fondly.

Dear Lou:

I remember you, although it was long, long ago in a galaxy far, far away. One of the other kids that used to hang around that office, Jay Bliznick, now runs the Chicago Underground Film Festival. That was a fun office and a fun time. Good to hear from you and all the best.

Josh

Name: Tanya
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

Do you have a movie idea in your mind that would be your ultimate fantasy to direct? If so, what would the story be, who would it be written by, who would the actors be, the music by, etc.? You could have everything you could possibly want.

Thanks,
Tanya

Dear Tanya:

It would be a documentary called "Gang Bang" and would star me, Michelle Pfeiffer, Helena Bonham Carter, Uma Thurman and Gwyneth Paltrow, and it would be 24-hours long.

Josh

Name: bill
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

After reading more, I came up with more. I have to say, I've learned more from this site than any other site. I have yet to find a site I could learn more about film, let alone all the trivial items brought to the table. I can only thank you for the experience. One last thing: there's not a damn thing wrong with a well written romance novel...and they've accomplished getting it published.

Dear Bill:

I certainly never said anything against romance novels. I worked in bookstores for years and sold hundreds of them. As far as I'm concerned, anyone that reads books is better off than anyone that doesn't read books, and I don't care what kind of books they are. There is still no denser form of information conveyance than books, and the internet doesn't come close. And I'm glad you like the site, Shirley and I do our best.

Josh

Name: Bill
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

I just have a couple of comments. First off, I would have to argue a little on the side of fan fiction. Although I don't do this myself, I have seen some rather well written ones. Although this is essentially a waste of time since they won't sale them, I would think it would be good practice and when they decide to move on in life, assuming it includes writing, then they could have mastered their skills. Ok, so this isn't likely to happen, but it's possible. It's kind of like in grade school when they made me write stupid ass personal experiences in narrative form. Like I've had that exciting a life by the 4th grade? However, I learned to use the same story over and over again, all the way through college. By the time I was in college I had the story down to perfection. I could come up with bull shit description with no problem. Not exactly the same but maybe you can see some sort of point mixed in there. Now, role playing games are something completely different and defenseless....On a side note, the John Forde that frequents this site doesn't happen to be the "Mental" guy? (that's not an insult btw, but he would know what I was talking about if it is).

Dear Bill:

To me "Fan Fiction" is like asking, "What if Gilligan had sex with Mary-Ann?" which is a truly worthless endeavor. This is basically people with too much time on their hands that take TV too seriously. TV is, for the most part, a night-light with sound. Most of what is shown is visual and audio detritus (thank God for TCM, that's all I can say). As to John Forde being the "Mental" guy, he'll have to answer that one.

Josh

Name: Annie
E-mail: Maryion@Hotmail.com

Dear Mr. Becker,

Thank you for responding in a timely manner to my letter, the explanation was appreciated... I'm sorry If My letter was: Pushy, obnoxious, or annoying. It wasn't intended.

As for the Fanfiction part, that you seem to think is a disgusting waste of time, and if time is money, Money as well, I've written fanfiction, I'm actually published on many sites. The show you directed (Past tense, you don't anymore) has stirred great emotions in the heart of human kind, that is nothing to shun, or even call stupid...

If you want to see a waste of paper read a romance novel. If you want to see a waste of internet space, look at your site.

No Questions, I'm just thanking you, and responding.

Annie
Princess of all Joxerness
Keeper of Joe's Coat
Founder of the SDoD
Founder of the JRF

Dear Annie:

And no one can ever say you wasted your life.

Josh

Name: Jan Ouellette
E-mail: jjamo@net1plus.com

Dear Josh:

I understand Mr. Becker just did a Lycos chat where he apparently indicated he would not be doing any more Xena or RenPic stuff. Is he at liberty to explain further why this is so?

Dear Jan:

The reason I got was that they were exclusively using New Zealand directors from now on, as they cost half as much money and don't get residuals. However, the first two directors up on Xena were both Americans. I asked Rob Tapert about this and he said that there would be no comedies this season, and if they're only doing serious ones, then I'm probably not the guy for the job.

Josh

Name: ALAN
E-mail: picquickstudio@aol.com

Dear Josh:

You probably feel embittered at the way things have recently gone at Renaissance but remember one thing. 30 or 40 years down the line people not yet born will be watching XENA on cable, satellite and other forms of medium as yet undreamt of most likely. When they watch some of these episodes they will see the name Josh Becker as director and remember you with respect as one of the individuals involved in the making of what will surely be looked upon as one of the greatest genre TV shows ever created. No-one can take that from you. Whichever way your career progresses from now until then that fact is a given.

Dear Alan:

Thanks for the vote of confidence. You really think people will give a rat's ass about Xena in 40 years? I highly doubt it. 40 years ago everybody thought "Rawhide" and "Wagon Train" and "Have Gun, Will Travel" were the bee's knees, now nobody gives the slightest shit. TV is a disposable medium. If you enjoy the show, that's great, but I don't see it as my claim to fame or immortality.

Josh

Name: Annie
E-mail: maryion@Hotmail.com

Dear Mr. Becker,

I see that being nice gets you no where when It comes down to writing to you!

What can I say, I've been nice, I've been a Jerk, I figure this time that I'll just be myself, the best thing I can be.

So, Mr.Becker, or shall I call you Josh? Anyway. I was wondering, why you seem to hate the Xena fans so much? I mean, as said above this "No Ligit question will go unanswered" So I'm Just asking. What do you have against us. I mean we didn't do anything. Or did we? I really don't know, I'm a little out of the Xena circle. I'm sure that you have a few snide comments you can say to me, and all of my Xenite friends.

I just want to know, why do all the directors seem have, well a major attitude problem? Wait, I just Gernalized all the directors in Hollywood, just like you generalize all the Xenites. So I'm just being a little hypocritical. Oh well, that seems to happen to me alot, I do that, become hypocritical. So Hun, why do ya hate us so much!?! There just has to be a story behind this!

It would be appreciated.
Thank You
The Ever courteous (NOT to mention Stubborn) Annie

Dear Annie:

I don't hate Xena fans, I just can't stand obnoxious, pushy people no matter what their affiliations are. I am a big fan of many things, but I don't have to kid myself believing that I have something to do with the creation of these things. What the online Xena fans think of the show is of no meaning or value to the making of the show. Writing long analysis of plots, "fan fiction" and poems about the characters of a TV show is a silly, stupid waste of time, and the people that do such things are not worth listening to. As I've said before, the online Xena fans don't amount to 1% of the viewing audience, so who cares what they think? Not me. Not to mention that I'm not working on the show anymore, so cares what I think? Xena's old news anyway and will more than likely will end at the end of this next season. I certainly don't "hate" the online Xena fans, I'm just bored by them and do not need anymore pushy, obnoxious letters from any of them.

Josh

Name: Peter
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

How do you get yourself in the mood to write a script? Do you write in the morning, or in the evening? Do you listen to music when you write? And lastly, do you have any favorite writing books that you can recommend to those of us aspiring to become screenwriters? Thanks so much.

Peter

Dear Peter:

I write everyday whether I'm working on a script or not. If I'm actually writing a script (which I'm not at the moment) there's really very little else I want to do. If you've outlined your story and know what each scene is supposed to be about and know what your ending is, sitting down and writing it isn't a problem, at least not for me. But if I don't know where I'm going than it's something of a horror. The process of writing is not the same process as thinking up the story. The story should be worked-out by the time you're writing the script. I can write any time of the day or night, although I prefer the middle of the night because it's quiet. I listen to jazz or classical while I write. As for recommended reading, first would be my six [structure essays](#). Syd Field's screenwriting book seemed both reasonable and short, I've never read Robert McKee's book but sounds good, Lajos Egri's "The Art of Dramatic Writing" was very important to me as a writer, but it's old and not necessarily easy to read.

Josh

Name: Peter

E-mail:

Hi Josh,

In making an Independent film with a VERY, VERY LOW budget, what aspect of the film is the most important element (besides the script) in producing a product that looks more expensive than it actually is?
Thanks.

Peter

Dear Peter:

Well thought-out shots and cutting, as well as good lighting. I think a good example of a nicely conceived, well-shot, cut and lit low, low-budget picture is "Pi." Not having much money for the set on "Pi", Mr. Aronofsky uses black very wisely--meaning, if something doesn't look all that good, don't light it. Very little light will hide many sins. Beyond any of this, get the very best actors you can find. Bad acting will kill your film quicker than anything else.

Josh

Name: bill

E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Have you had any experience or what's your professional opinion on a 35mm Arriflex 35-IICB camera package with 25mm, 50mm, 75mm Lenses, Matte Box, Two 400' Magazines, Hi-Hat, Constant Speed Motor, Power Cables, Batteries and Case. It's only 150 a day so I'm looking at it closely. Thought I'd see what you had to say before I make a final decision. Thanks.

Dear Bill:

The Arri 35-2CB is an older model camera, mainly used for high speed shooting, although with the constant speed motor it will run in sync at 24fps, but, if I recall correctly, it's one noisy son of a gun. You need to hear what it sounds like with it's sync motor and try putting a blanket over it to blimp the noise. I don't know how much sync footage you intend to shoot, but if it's a lot and there are many interiors where the camera noise will be amplified, it may not be the camera you want to use. If you have a lot of sync dialog you probably want to look into the Arri-35BL, the "BL" means "Blimped Lens" so camera noise doesn't come out the front end.

Josh

Name: DREW

E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Hey man, sorry I missed your chat session you had the other day. How did it go, and will there be a transcript posted soon? Thanks.

Dear Drew:

I think these internet chats are a big technological step backward. TV, Radio, telephone, or two cans and a piece of string all beat it. It was pretty much worthless, I thought. There have been hundreds more interesting Qs and As here on this site, from people just like you.

Josh

Name: Pleasure

E-mail: pleasure03@cs.com

Dear Josh:

What are your disadvantages and advantages? How much do you make a year ?

Dear Pleasure:

Both my biggest advantage and disadvantage are probably my overcharged, underwhelmed brain. I have made as much as \$90,000 a year, but so far this year I haven't made a cent.

Josh

Name: Mary Terrell

E-mail: METBard@aol.com

Dear Josh:

I just read you're commentary on stupid American cowboys and wanted to say that I agree with you. I've often said to others when the handgun debate has come up that having one doesn't guarentee your safety.

Dear Mary:

No, I'd say a gun does not guarantee safety, that is an illusion. I drove a taxi in Detroit for a couple of years. Nearly every driver but me had a gun and many got held up. I never did because A.) I was lucky, but B.) I tried to be as polite and pleasant to all of my fares as I could be, with the knowledge that some of them undoubtedly had guns. There is no guarantee to safety, but being polite is probably a better approach than carrying a gun, which is illegal.

Josh

Name: ALAN
E-mail: picquickstudio@aol.com

Josh

I think you are so lucky not to have to direct JOAT again; this show does not work at all. Because you never get to see the characters in any real danger the action scenes do not grab the attention at all. In any case, as much as I like Bruce Campbell, he has never been able to throw a convincing punch and the daring dragon idea should have been stifled at birth.

Dear Alan:

Yeah, but it paid pretty well. Quite frankly, I think "Jack" is a dead duck anyway.

Josh

Name: Joe Fay
E-mail: Joseph_k_fay@icpphil.navy.mil

Dear Josh:

What year was "Hell is for Heros" released and was there a TV series based on the film?

Dear Joe:

The film was made in 1962 and was kind of important in the early career of Steve McQueen, but I always thought he was too glum and downbeat in it. It's got that oddball cast, too: Fess Parker, Bobby Darin, James Coburn, Bob Newhart, and it was directed by Don Siegel and I still don't care for it. I don't think a TV series was based on it.

Josh

Name: Elizabeth
E-mail: elizabethannebennett@hotmail.com

Hi Josh,

I just read "America: Land of the Stupid Cowboys". It was really interesting to read, especially since I am not from the United States. I am Canadian. I just wanted to comment that right after I read your article, I went to watch tv and the Simpson's was on. It was the episode where Homer joins a gun club, gets a gun and abuses it by using it to open beer cans and turn on the tv. I thought it was very coincidental and strange that this episode was on right after I read your article. Well, take care and keep writing. :)

Elizabeth

Dear Elizabeth:

I've never seen that one. There's something wonderful in that I'm so bad at catching a weekly TV show that I've missed at least half of "The Simpsons" episodes, and I've been watching since the 2nd season. I don't think I've actually brought up anything new in my gun essay, but I just felt that the situation was not being clearly presented. We don't have to let our country slide down the toilet if we don't want, but it entails standing up for something.

Josh

Name: Buddy

E-mail:

Hey Josh.

Quick question about your buddy Ted Raimi. What exactly is the deal with him and Xena this coming Xena. From what I've been hearing it seems he's left the show and won't be on it for the coming season. Since you know him, is it true that he has left and if so do you know why he decided to leave?

Thanks for your time.

Buddy

Dear Buddy:

I guess his contract expired and he didn't re-up. I really don't want to be a pipeline to information about "Xena."

Josh

Name: Tamandra

E-mail: TAMandraM@aol.com

Josh,

I,too,am very impressed with your current essay on the gun issue. I'm often dismayed by the screwed up logic this country has on many issues, and I'm right with you on this one. I also live in L.A., and I heard recently that something like 6 out of 10 drivers have a concealed weapon on them, quite a scary thought, given the ridiculous amount of road rage one sees on any given day here. People used to get into fist fights when someone pissed them off, now,there are some that will pull out a pistol and shoot, and think nothing of

it. I've heard some really unbelievable stories from a teacher of mine of the results of the "freedom" of having guns. Things like a friend who tried to intercede with an argument a couple was having in a parking lot, shot dead before he hit the ground. Some guy flips off a bunch of kids in tangle of road rage, and gets chased down into a store and shot multiple times in the open, after which the the youth gunmen nonchalantly walked back to their car. It's insane, now you have pre-pubescent children toting guns and labeling themselves thugs, wanting to be a renegade, and eschewing gangs even.

Even more ludicrous is that I hear echoed constantly, that "all these kids need is a good whipping." Yeah, that's the answer, bring back corporal punishment in schools, get rid of all those violent video games, movies and tv shows, and somehow this will magically turn the clock back to some imaginary blissful time of "old fashioned values".

I think the religious right has a frightening amount of influence with those in power. There is so much hypocrisy, not to mention ignorance and stupidity going on with that issue! (As Bruce says, "don't get me started" lol). Now that one is a thorn in my side, too, and I try to vent through my art. In fact, your essay has got my wheels spinning toward doing a painting about the issues you touched on. I'm curious about what you think of the visual arts, and what artist's work you might have felt drawn to in that segment.

Thanks for the essay, and as always, your unique no bullshit insight.

Tamandra

Dear Tamandra:

BTW, Bruce is imitating Lou Costello with, "Don't get me started." As to the "visual arts," which movies are certainly a part of, I think you just mean painters, right? I like Rembrandt and the Dutch Masters and particularly their use of black. I like Dali and Van Gogh and Monet and Manet and Renoir and Magritte and Serrault and Miro and Mondrian and Hopper and Picasso and Degas and Sargent and my brain is spinning with shapes and colors. But, by golly I sure like those deep blacks.

Josh

Name: david owen
E-mail: iggybonce@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

josh am hosting a film festival in the uk this fall. would love to show some of your films. any chance?

cheers
owen

Dear Owen:

Here's the deal: I have one 35mm blow-up print of "Running Time" that cost almost \$6000 and I'm not crazy about how it looks; I have two chewed-up 16mm prints; I have one pristine 35mm print of "Lunatics" I don't want to send anywhere; I have another 35mm print that has chewed-up sections on several reels; and I have one beat-up but showable 35mm print of "TSNKE" and two other beat-up and unshowable prints of it, and my new film isn't done yet. I recommend purchasing a DVD of "Running Time," which looks better than any of the film prints, and projecting it. "TSNKE" is supposed to be out on DVD in Sept.

Josh

Name: D. Sticker
E-mail: mrsticker@mindspring.com

Dear Josh:

I LOVE your perspective and I love TSNKE. Here's a little poem that I wrote, it's called "TSNKE"

Everyone needs love
We dont need TSNKE
We love TSNKE

Dear D. Sticker:

Helluva good poem there, dude, keep up the good work.

Josh

Name: Bill
E-mail:

Josh!

Have you ever seen "The Story of GI Joe" with Robert Mitchum and Burgess Meredith? Oh my God, I'm going back in to watch it again! Awesome!

Dear Bill:

I saw it on TV when I was about ten. You make it sound great, so I'll try to catch it again. It's very early Mitchum.

Josh

Name: Todd
E-mail: toddowoddo@hotmail.com

Hi Josh,

Just wanted you to know how refreshing I found your essay on guns in this country. I wish that our elected official's had the balls to bluntly make so strong a point as you just did. Instead they always speak in vague generalities without expressing any real convictions.

Have you seen the two commercials aired recently by the NRA featuring Heston (attempting to counter that recent women's march on Washington)? The ads use the phrase "gun safety" and repeatedly empasize "education" over "politics". They're going to donate a million dollars to schools to educate children about gun

safety, and they want us to donate money too (isn't that nice?)! Think about the warped logic that professes: Instead of passing laws requiring trigger-locks or making it harder for kids to obtain guns, schools should be teaching kids how to handle them safely! Well, the NRA's idea of gun safety ("only aim at what you intend to shoot") would hardly prevent the likes of the Littleton shootings -- if anything, it simply would have made the killers better shots.

You also touched briefly on another major thorn in MY side -- our democracy's destruction at the hands of corporate America (the uber-citizenry!) and the public's resulting helplessness and apathy.

I have recently decided to support Ralph Nader in the next Presidential election, and if you check out his views and essays at <http://www.votenader.com/index.html> you'll understand why. The media often suggests that voting for a third-party candidate merely helps or hurts the Democrat or Republican (i.e. "real") contenders, or worse, they fail to acknowledge that alternative candidates even exist. This is hardly surprising, since the media is in the hands of four or five corporations (Murdoch, Disney, GE, etc.) who benefit from maintaining the status quo. Plus you have a bi-partisan committee controlling which candidates participate in debates (resulting in two debaters -- big surprise!).

Look at our choices this time: Are either Bush or Gore going to press for real change in this country? Of course not; they'll be working to perpetuate the same corrupt system that got them elected. There have been third party candidates elected in the past and it could happen again if people stopped voting for "the lesser of two evils" and instead searched for real alternatives. But we really do have to *search* -- you won't see the local news including any third-party candidate in their "plus or minus 5%" poll results. (What happens to that 5%? If they have the number of people polled, can't they get a correct figure? Don't they have calculators? The problem is that not everyone polled wants to choose between Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, but the pollsters aren't interested in those people.)

Realistically, a third party candidate probably doesn't have a chance in *this* coming election. But it's still early, and Nader is actually getting some media attention (both the UAW and some environmentalist groups have stated publicly that they no longer trust Gore). My hope is that he can win the necessary 15% vote to qualify the Green party for *federal funds*, and then they'll have a better chance four years from now. And I don't care if Nader takes votes away from Gore and ultimately helps Bush win, because I can't see any real difference between those two anyway.

Dear Todd:

I do. I'm not crazy about the Democrats, but I'm frightened by Republicans. I feel the Republicans number one agenda is always to get us into a war as quick as possible because it's good for industry and big business. Quite frankly, I think there's WORLD of difference between Gore and Bush the Younger; at least Gore's heart's in the right place and he has a good solid sense of environmental values. As someone said of Bush, jr. recently, "He was born on 3rd base and thinks he hit a triple." Both Bushes are putzes and I don't want the kid anywhere near the White House.

Good letter, Todd.

Josh

Name: Bill
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Are you able to attach actors to your projects to help you sale them? For instance, if you wrote a script that you wanted Bruce Willis to be in could you send the script to him and (if he were to like it) become attached to the project. This would certainly make selling it easier, right? Do you have to pay an actor anything? For

instance, you talk about your war movie and if you attached some names to it, would it be easier to get someone to back it. Looking forward to your [Lycos chat](#).

Dear Bill:

Attaching an actor to a project is another ridiculous, idiotic Hollywood Catch-22. First of all, I can't get anything to anybody, you need agents for that and I don't have an agent. Second, actors with any name at all, let alone Bruce Willis, are only interested in financed, "Go" projects. I could probably hustle 2nd or 3rd level "name" actors, like the actors that do TV movies, but that won't get a project financed.

Josh

Name: Sirand
E-mail: sirand@aol.com

Hey Josh!

Been looking over a lot of your film criticisms and essays, and some of your rants have made me curious. If all screen-writers and directors followed your story structures, wouldn't all movies be really BORING? Surely in an industry full of cheap clones and unoriginality, you have to acknowledge the Terry Gilliams and Spike Jonzes out there who try to do something DIFFERENT. Don't you believe in taking risks with story structures?

Dear Sirand:

No. You need to read my six structure essays. Simply put, though, you cannot move beyond the form until you've mastered the form. You can't get to deconstruction until you completely understand construction. To use the building metaphor, as I have several times before, if you build a house with no roof you may think of yourself as a "risk-taker," but in fact you're just a shitty builder that built a worthless house. Not having a roof, walls or a foundation is not a viable choice.

Josh

Name: MRS CAROLE BEDFORD
E-mail: carlton_tavern@ic24.net

Dear Josh:

I just got to read about your working with anthony quinn and thoroughly enjoyed it he can be a difficult old boy cant he? but then he was a very complex young man as well as a difficult one he has been my idol since i was a child and i am now 49 and in the last few days the world has been saddened by the death of sir john guiguld but i really would be overwrought at the passing of anthony quinn my darling darling beautiful complex man im so jealous that you have all those autographs and i have none go on make an old girl very happy and thanks for sharing the insight into your time spent with him regards for the future.

Dear Carole:

My good buddy Tony Quinn. I earned my money working with him.

Josh

Name: August
E-mail: joxerfan@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Thanks for your kind response to my previous question - you made my day!

I just noticed that John Gielgud passed away. His distinguished stage career notwithstanding, I have always been impressed with his film work as a character actor, winning an Oscar for essentially a stock-role in "Arthur," and still playing wise counselor-guys well into his '90's. Any reflections or comments on his work?

Thanks,
August

Dear August:

I'm sorry to hear about John Gielgud, although he was 150 years old. He's the last of the great trio of British theater actors: Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, and John Gielgud. He was pretty darn funny in "Arthur." Although he was good in everything, he never really got great film roles. Apparently, Gielgud was instrumental in helping Marlon Brando get through "Julius Caesar." He was also renowned for sticking his foot in his mouth, amusingly termed "Giel-goofs." Another era has ended.

Josh

Name: Alan
E-mail: Picquickstudio@aol.com

Dear Josh,

I have just watched the JOAT episode "The Floundering Father" and wondered if you could tell me the name of the guy who played Blackbeard? I need to know so that if I ever see his name attached to any other project I can avoid it like the plague; even if it were to star a re-incarnated Bruce Lee, Marilyn Monroe and James Dean!

Dear Alan:

Sorry, I have no idea who it is. I don't watch the show, and I certainly won't be watching any from now on. Quite frankly, I don't like TV shows (except "The Simpsons"). It's a perfectly good appliance for watching movies, however.

Josh

Name: August

E-mail: joxerfan@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

While it sucks for your fans that we may not see any more Xena/Herc/Jack episodes directed by you, all is for the best if it enabled you to get "Hammer" done, and now inspires you to get going on the WWI movie. (And didn't you say you had a Western in the works too?)

So here's a sincere question that seriously I bet a lot of your fans are wondering. Once "Hammer" is finished, what can we do to help its success? Will you go the video distribution route as with "Running Time?" Do you hope to line up a theatre distribution deal? Here in my town there is an independent "art film" house that runs indie films, foreign films, classic films, etc. But would getting a 2-3 day, 4-6 screenings run of your film at any isolated theatre help you in the long run? (If yes, say "Yes!")

Or would video sales and rentals be the best route for you ultimately? In that case, I should think word of mouth recommendations might be helpful.

C'mon - I don't want to have to wait for a revival of "Real Stories of the Highway Patrol" to see more of your work!

Thanks,
August

Dear August:

You are a nice, funny fellow and I appreciate all of your letters. I will certainly try for a theatrical release on "Hammer," however, since it's a very expensive proposition, I don't depend on it. As for video distribution, which is better than a sharp stick in the eye, I will be hard pressed to make my money back. I still haven't broken even on "Running Time" and that only cost \$130,000. "Hammer" is pushing \$300,000, so if I don't do a better job than I did with "RT," I'm boned. Thanks for the kind thoughts, though.

Josh

Name: Trisha Von Doss
E-mail: xenamour@cs.com

Dear Mr. Becker,

I have need of a literary agent. I was wondering if there were any agents, or agencies, you would recommend. I know it is essential that the agent one chooses, (or perhaps, who Choose You), works in one's medium of choice.

I was wondering if it isn't also important for the literary agent chosen, be oriented to a particular genere, or to a particular television show if for example, you are trying to shop your story to a specific show.

Thanks.
Trish Von Doss

Dear Trish:

In 24 years in Hollywood I've had 8 different agents and none of them ever got me a job. The concept of a

"good agent" is an oxymoron. The bottom line, ultimately, is the only agent you want is the agent that wants you, because if they don't think you're special and wonderful they are not going to work for you. As Woody Allen said of the movie business, it's not dog eat dog, it's dog doesn't call dog back.

Josh

Name: LINDA SPALTON
E-mail: spalton@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I feel that apart from the story line/plot being the last thing film makers have thought of before releasing, that the technique of good lighting which would in many cases replace dialogue, seems to be neglected, alot of the films do not seem to be able to come over that well, they are too bright even though its a thriller!

DearLinda:

You said it.

Josh

Name: Rickster
E-mail:

Josh,

Hi, why won't you be directing for Ren Pictures anymore?

Best,
Rickster

Dear Rickster:

I don't care to dwell on it, but the reason given me was that they were only using New Zealand directors, who are half as much money with no residuals. That sucks, but that's life, I suppose.

Josh

Name: August
E-mail: joxerfan@hotmail.com

Dear Josh,

Just wanted to take a minute and let you know how much I enjoyed your latest essay on "The Need For Structure." "River Kwai" has always been one of my favorites as well, and yet I had never really considered the stubbornness of the Alec Guinness character to be a negative (until the end, of course.) The whole "duty" theme had been pretty obvious to me, but you've provided an interesting new interpretation, for me anyway. I

also laughed out loud at your correspondent's claim that he was "a rebel."

Just as you said that a theme could be as simple as one word, I've read that an actor's "motivation" can be simplified to one desire, as in "I want...." whatever. Any thought on that, or how you've worked with actors on that issue?

Oh, by the way, I just passed on that Stooges info since you had expressed outrage at how shabbily they had been treated at Columbia, and I thought you might be interested in knowing that their heirs, at least, were at last benefitting from their body of work. (However belatedly!)

Thanks,
August

Dear August:

Thank God someone read that essay, I was beginning to think I'd written it for my own amusement, which I did, but still. Since the theme comes out of the characters, particularly the lead, then that one word is the same for both. For both Sessue Hayakawa and Alec Guinness their motivations are "Duty" and what it specifically means to their characters.

Josh

Name: bill
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

On the not directing any more ren pics shows...why the hell not? By the way, I saw Being John Malkovich and I honestly can't believe you survived the first 30 minutes. Anything that was remotely amusing was stolen, although most movies are that way. Also, I saw Fight Club, which people have asked you numerous times if you've seen. I can't see how anyone would like this flawed piece of crap either. There were some interesting directing techniques used but the script was a total piece of crap and it seemed the writer had 5 minutes of material and turned it into a mini series.

Dear Bill:

I guess my services weren't appreciated. I honestly did like the first 15-20 of "Being John Malkovich" when it was the story of this ridiculously low-budget couple. It wasn't until they found the tunnel into John Malkovich's head that I lost interest--but then it was a total loss. I finally did see "The Fight Club" and there's perhaps a third of an interesting movie there. The idea of guys fighting to lose is completely stupid to me, and when Brad Pitt turns out to actually be Ed Norton it all drops dead. All that crap with commandos in black berets was pathetic.

Josh

Name: Tammy
E-mail: TLJ102@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Hi im a big fan of yours. I am also a huge fan of the books The Lord of the Rings. I just wanted to know what your feeling are on the movies that they are filming of the books, and if they had offered would you have ever considered directing it? Thanks!

Dear Tammy:

I'm entirely the wrong guy for the job, having never finished the books because the completely didn't interest me. I don't like that kind of fantasy, with cute, furry hobbits and shit like that. I was a serious science fiction fan--Asimov, Ellison, Heinlein, Clarke--and was actively against such silliness as "Lord of the Rings." I know a number of people working on the crew and I hear that it's a completely insane, totally out-of-control production, which doesn't bode well for a good movie. Peter Jackson is a much more appropriate choice than I. Sadly, I don't care for any of his movies.

Josh

Name: August
E-mail: joxerfan@hotmail

Dear Josh:

There's a rumor floating about the net about your bud Ted Raimi turning up on "Jack of All Trades" next year. Any truth to that? Also, any word on any eps you might direct of that or of XWP?

Also, from one Stooges fan to another, this may warm the cockles of your heart: According to the official Stooges website, the TV movie "received tremendous television ratings. More people watched The Three Stooges movie than watched any other ABC Monday night movie for the last four years..... We, however, wish you to know that today the heirs company, C3 Entertainment, Inc., owns all merchandising rights, all trademarks, and all other rights pertaining to The Three Stooges brand. Although Columbia may not have treated the Stooges well in the past, we are pleased to report that at the present time the Stooges heirs, through C3 Entertainment, Inc., have resolved all past differences with Columbia and today are working with Columbia to bring to you new productions including a brand new theatrical Three Stooges motion picture, which we hope will be available to you in 2001. "

Not too shabby!

Thanks,
August

Dear August:

I can say with reasonable certainty that I will not be directing anymore TV shows for Renaissance Pictures. So it goes. I guess I'll be forced to make my feature film career work now. I didn't even see the Stooges TV movie, so it doesn't much matter to me. But if you enjoyed it, that's great.

Josh

Name: omerdahoush
E-mail: omerdahoush@usa.net

Dear Josch Becker

My name Omer Dahoush and I live in Sweden. My question is if there are good directing school in Miami and how I can make contact with them?

Thank you
Omer

Dear Omer:

If you're serious about going to film school, you need to try to get into New York University, University of Southern California or the University of California Los Angeles. I've never heard of a good film school in Miami.
Good luck.

Josh

Name: Resin Head
E-mail:

Josh,

I like the fact that you are open about your enjoyment of marijuana. It actually is a courageous act in this day and age.

My question: have you ever written any scripts that could be considered a "stoner flick?" I like your writing and it seems like you would be able to pull off a well written structured film on this topic free of the "Cheech and Chong" meets "Dazed and Confused" cliches that plague every pot film I've ever seen.

I will do a bong hit in your honor at tonights screening of "Running Time."

Your bud,
Resin Head

Dear Resin Head:

Yes, as a matter of fact, I did write a stoner comedy (with Scott Spiegel) called "Delirious" in 1983. It's the story of the odyssey of two stoners trying to buy a bag of weed, and finally ending up in Ann Arbor during the yearly Hash Bash, which no longer exists.

Enjoy your bong hit and "Running Time."

Josh

Name: Gord
E-mail: gord@gordzajac.com

Josh, I'm just curious if you've seen any Canadian films lately? Specifically, I'm thinking of such films as "Red Violin," "Last Night," "The Sweet Hereafter," etc.

Being from Canada, I know I'm a little biased, but I find a lot of these films are far more solidly crafted (in terms of story structure, character arcs, etc.) than most current Hollywood films (Sixth Sense being an obvious exception...)

Gord

Dear Gord:

I have not seen any of those films, nor any of Atom Egoyan's films. Why? I don't know. I'll keep my eyes peeled for them, though.

Josh

Name: Paul
E-mail: don't have one

Dear Josh,

I was just browsing through your favorite films list and I was a bit shocked to see "Slacker" there. First of all, what in God's name did you like about this movie? I can't even sit through it. It's just a bunch of generation-x stereotypes who have absolutely nothing to say. Linklater states his point within the first 10 minutes but keeps on pounding it in for some reason.

Also, this film has no structure to it, which leads me to the following question. When do you believe the rules of structure can be disregarded?

Best wishes to you

Dear Paul:

It most certainly does have a structure, but not a normal one, nor one that will get you through 97 minutes. The structure, which I'd never seen before (and never needs to be repeated) is that one character takes you to the next that takes you to the next that takes you to the next . . . I thought it actually worked rather well for 45-60 minutes. I'll bet I couldn't sit all the way through it again, but I enjoyed in the theater.

Josh

Name: Paul
E-mail: don't have one

Dear Josh,

What kind of cigars was Bruce really smoking in your excellent film "Running Time?" Also, are you a cigar smoker yourself?

Dear Paul:

I don't know, they were purchased by the art director, but I can assure that they weren't really Cuban as is stated in the film. I don't smoke cigars, just cigarettes.

Josh

Name: Spill the Wine
E-mail: spillit@ao.com

Hi Josh,

I've seen all of your films so far and it occurred to me that your films, although well-structured, lack a bite. I wanted to know what your ultimate goal is? Do you make films just to please yourself, or to try to get a serious production company/distributor to pick them up? I ask these questions not to insult or make you upset, but to understand what your ultimate goal is as a director. I mean, if you are making films to get recognized by the Hollywood establishment then why do you sabotage relationships with people who can help that process along? It's not about kissing ass, but maybe about just keeping your mouth shut until you get a good deal. Then, once you are successful, you can throw all the temper tantrums you want. Just a thought. On the other hand, if you are just making films for your own pleasure, tell them all to kiss your ass. You have a couple of powerful friends who help you out with TV directing gigs in the downtime anyway.

Dear Spill the Wine:

I'm not sure what you mean by "lack a bite?" Perhaps you'll find some bite in my next film, "If I Had a Hammer." Perhaps not. I certainly made the last two films entirely for me. If my goal was to make it in Hollywood, I don't think a period folk musical allegory will get me one inch further. It amuses me when folks that have no clue what they're talking about give me advice (Bruce Campbell gets career advice daily). "It's not about kissing ass"? How do you know? It seems to me that kissing ass is what it's ALL about.

Josh

Name: Rocky
E-mail:

Josh, What happened to the boxing movie you always wanted to do? Do you still plan on writing a script for it?

Dear Rocky:

What boxing movie? I don't recall ever mentioning one. I am a boxing fan, and I did make a Super-8 boxing movie, "The Final Round." Also, my script "Teddy Roosevelt in the Badlands" has boxing in it.

Josh

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