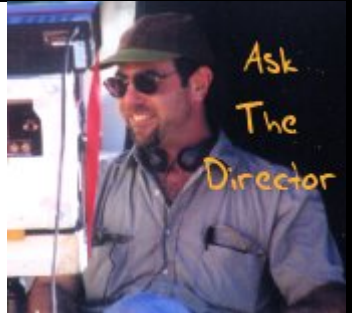


# Josh Becker DGA

## Directing From The Edge



Q & A Archive  
Page 18

Name: Ben  
E-mail: bdabrowski@tra.com

Dear Josh,

Although I can't deny that your criticisms of popular films are completely justified, I don't understand (entirely) the fact that once a story deviates from a standard, three-act structure, it is instantly deemed a worthless endeavor. I read through some of the Q&A entries, becoming more frustrated by the minute by the horrible writing skills of some of your anti-fans. I'm sure you're no more delighted by them, since you actually have to reply to these people who seem to type as if someone switched the buttons on their keyboard (they have no pride), so I will not say, "yo them matrix was incredibil," or "mel gybson was cool in the patriot," but I would like to know if you have ever been entertained by a film that broke some rules? Also, I asked a question last week that you apparently answered earlier. I don't like making people repeat themselves, so have you considered putting a search feature on the site?

Thanks.  
See you.

Dear Ben:

Yes, there are a few exceptions, as there are to most everything. As someone pointed out in an earlier letter, "Marty," one of my favorite films, has possibly a two-minute act three, but somehow that two minutes of resolution is sufficient. In "Barfly" the lead character is the same exact person at the end as he was at the beginning (an obstinate drunk), and the action of all three acts is the same (fighting the bartender), but it's still a good film. To go back to my standard metaphor of a house, yes there are exceptions to the foundation/walls/roof structure most of us live in, you could live in a hollowed-out tree or a pup tent, but for the most part houses consist of a foundation, walls and a roof and they go in a certain order. The roof won't do you much good if it's under the foundation, nor will the foundation support your house if it's on top of the roof. As to a search feature, that's a question for Shirley, the webmaster (so, Shirley, what about a search feature?).

Josh

Dear Ben and Josh,

That's an excellent idea, I'll see what I can come up with.

Shirley

Name: chris

E-mail: yakin\_in\_yaki@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

you haven't traveled much outside your neighborhood have you? We operate a 99 cent store and you did not discribe ours. to better write on a subject you really must travel.

Dear Chris:

I was all set to go on the International 99-cent Store Tour, but my plans fell through. Maybe next year.

Josh

Name: Susan Byers Paxson

E-mail: sbyers@abtassoc.com

Mr. Becker,

I stumbled upon your essay while searching for background on Ernest Poole, and stayed to read the whole thing, having a passing interest in film, literature, history, and a perceived notion of the basic degeneration of society. I was especially struck by your description of your VBUA friends, and was chagrined to see more than a bit of myself there, an over-educated professional musician with a day job and multiple interests but few actual accomplishments (of course, there's that kid I raised by myself, who may very well turn out to be an accomplishment someday . . .). And then I look at my husband, still going after that big orchestra job in his late 30s, against all the odds, still practicing 8 hours a day even though I and everyone else we ever went to school with gave that up long ago, still hungry and slugging it out, and I am embarassed for every time I have listened and groaned inwardly "O God, not Don Juan again." And I am ashamed because this same man says to me, "Honey, when I get that job you can quit your day job that you hate and go back to school and learn about film preservation or whatever you want," because I realize that I have stopped dreaming for myself, but that he is keeping my dreams alive as well as his own, even in spite of me.

So thank you for writing what you did, and for posting it where I could trip over it. It may not be All Quiet On the Western Front, or even Bringing Up Baby, but is the knowledge that you touched at least one person and made her think worth anything? I'll promise to keep flailing if you will, and you can be sure my teenager knows precisely when the American Civil War was fought (he also watches TCM by preference, the only 13-year-old of his acquaintance to do so, I'm sure). Maybe civilization can be saved, after all.

Very truly yours,

Susan Byers Paxson

Dear Susan:

Thank you for the very nice letter. If indeed my writing has affected one person then it was most definitely worthwhile. It's the line from Rodgers & Hammerstein's "South Pacific," where it says, "If you haven't got a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?"

Josh

Name: thomas stewart  
E-mail: tomstewart60@hotmail.com

dear mr becker,

i would first of all like to congratulate yourself on a series of informative essays i have just annotated.

I am 18 years old and am becoming more and more driven into film. I have recently concieved an idea i wish to turn into celluloid.

However, due to constraints upon location and talent the film is a god awful horror set in a church in romania. The film will be plot driven but will deal with the issues of unrequented love, suicide and interfamily jealousy and rivalry dynamics. The pitch is essential this, some holydaying students meet a person their age in a bar(in romania) and end up going to a church where they resserect a devil who plays them off against each other, making them kill themselves so he gets there souls and ends up being the man from the bar. I am sure you realise a great influence is the evil dead films.

However having read your essays I realise i cannot incorporate all the themes and subplots I want as it will become an unhinged mess, chaotic and of no commercial use. as well as i cannot think of a way for the students to react to demonic forces without screaming, saying it cannot be happening or ignoring it completely. my question is thus, should i bother trying to rework the plot to fit the character developments/transitions or should the characters become shallower to allow the plot to flow and the story to gradually pick up in pace. As in this letter i have tried to keep a basoce 3 act structure

kind regards  
Tom Stewart  
(from Great Britain)

Dear Tom:

Is English your second or third language? First of all, you should start reading, as much as possible. You need to read more before you start writing.

Josh

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

Josh

Looking at your favorite films I noticed that you have no Bruce Lee films amongst them or indeed any martial arts movies as I recall. Is this a genre of movie that you have no time for? Who do you think is the best screen martial artist you have seen and which movie (of any type) do you think includes the best fight scene?

Dear Alan:

I'd quickly say that Bruce Lee was by far the best screen martial artist, with the most style and the most engaging personality, but he never made a film that was actually a good film. I suppose "Enter the Dragon" is his best film, and it's a sloppy, poorly-made, badly-written film. Bruce Lee is very good, though. I always liked the way he pulled his pant legs up an inch before kicking ass. I can't bear anything with Jean Claude Van Damme in it--the only acting he does is poorly pretending that he's not a total prick and never pulls it off. All the rest of the martial arts guys are worse than Jean Claude. And now that I've shot as many fights as I have for Herc and Xena, I'll never be interested in them again.

Josh

Name: Jason Roth  
E-mail: rothj@river.it.gvsu.edu

Hi Josh,

This is reaching back a ways in the Q&A, but I was curious- what was the cut Army of Darkness scene you were in about? You had said you thought it was quite funny and shouldn't have been excised.

Peace,  
Jason

Dear Jason:

As I recall, and I think you might want to ask Bruce about this, Bruce and Embeth are possessed and seated on horses as Doug Sills (star of the Broadway musical "The Scarlet Pimpernel") was being taunted into singing a song. I was dressed as a skeleton in an outfit that took a half an hour to jam me into and had no fly, and my job was to stand there all night long beside skittish horses I couldn't quite see through my mask. I also had to run beside horses as a guy was dragged behind a horse. It was all very disconcerting. I can be seen as a villager standing directly beside Embeth Davidtz looking down into the pit where Ash has been thrown and I am screaming for his death.

Josh

Name: Kenneth Lynn Anderson  
E-mail: islandhouse@netzero.net

Dear Mr. Becker:

I want to send the director Gus Van Sant, Jr. a copy of my novel --thassall, as they say in the South, nothing else-- but he is listed as only Portland OR in my copy of the DGA directory. Do you know of an address (work or otherwise) where I could send him one?

Many thanks,  
Ken

Dear Ken:

No, I'm afraid I don't. I've never met the man. I do like "Drugstore Cowboy" very much.

Josh

Name: andrea raimi rubin

E-mail:

hey old neighbor josh... just found yer website, very interesting!!!! i've been keeping up with your career from my mom, what she knows. just wanted to touch base. hope all is well!!!! keep up the good work, maybe i'll see you next time you're in town.. or are you ever in town... anyways, i'm very proud of you!!! love to yer sis... andrea

Dear Andrea:

For the readers of this Q&A section, Andrea is Sam and Ted Raimi's sister. Hello, and thanks for dropping by, and thanks for the good wishes. All the best to you and yours.

Josh

Name: John Dollard

E-mail: jdollard@kc.rr.com

Dear Josh:

You are so wrong. You are also obviously a liberal, not a libratarian. The first thing the Nazis did was to register weapons so they knew who had them. handguns are used for self defense, I have had to use one to defend myself. Crack down on the criminals, and maybe we won't need handguns. Quit crackning on how stupid everyone besides yourself is, and realize you are an idiot.

Dear John:

No, no, I think it's MUCH more important that you realize that YOU are an idiot. That Nazi argument is weak, old and a bore. For everyone who has ever defended themselves with a handgun, there are tens of thousands of innocent people that are shot with handguns in America, and the stupidity aspect way outweighs the defense aspect. I repeat, there are many, many free, democratic governments in the world that have outlawed (or never allowed in the first place) handguns. And once again, I repeat, the Bill of Rights says nothing about handguns--it says that we have "the right to bear arms," and rifles entirely fulfill this. You dig your handgun? Too fucking bad. It's time for you and other boneheads like you to expand your consciences to include other people beside yourselves.

Love,

Josh

Name: Tamandra

E-mail: TAMandraM@aol.com

Josh,

Very cool pic of Bruce there in Jacksonville, and glad to hear you are enjoying your time up there in the sticks. Hearing about your inner tube excursion brought back memories, since I spent most of my high school years in Grants Pass, Oregon. I did that very same thing down the rogue river one summer. Funny, I didn't appreciate living in such a beautiful area at that time...now after living in L.A. for several years, it sounds very inviting. Sounds like Bruce is happy as a clam up there. Does he have a good degree of anonymity around there? Do you guys do any fishing at all in the Rogue?

Take care :)  
Tamandra

Dear Tamandra:

I don't think anyone in Oregon cares who he is, which is part of why he likes it. We were in Ashland and I saw a kid recognize Bruce and almost have a heart attack, which I found quite amusing. No, we didn't do any fishing.

Josh

Name: Marian Smith  
E-mail: mariansmith74@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

Great essays on structure! I myself read scripts for extra \$\$, and couldn't agree with your take better. Plus, your writing is humorous. Write a book! Teach a class! Please!

Dear Marian:

Thanks a lot. And it means something to me hearing that from someone who reads a lot of scripts. I figure once I've written enough structure essays, I'll have a book. I was almost going to teach at UCLA, but I panicked. Nevertheless, I may still teach at some point.

Josh

Name: Punam  
E-mail: moonfaceprodns@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

Thanks, it was a little over a year ago when I sought advice from you! My short film is done and though really ate my bank account I really enjoyed making the first steps in my (hopefully) life as a director! Thanks for your encouragement!

Dear Punam:

My great pleasure. Now make sure to finish the film. A lot of people shoot films, then don't complete them. Don't be one of them. Good luck.

Josh

Name: John Forde  
E-mail: jforde40@hotmail.com

Howdy Josh

Please recommend a few good documentaries. The last 3 I've seen (Hands On A Hard Body, The Grizzly Project, and American Movie) have captivated me more than anything Hollywood has produced lately.

Also, how's "Hammer" going and please post more of your writings.

Thanks partner

Howdy, John:

Lately, I've seen and enjoyed: "Six O'Clock News," Ross McElwee's 2nd follow-up to "Sherman's March" ("Time Indefinite" goes in between); "Wild Man Blues," Barbra Kopple's film of Woody Allen's Dixieland band tour of Europe; "Gray Gardens" and "Gimme Shelter," both by the Maysles Brothers; and a really good boxing documentary called "On the Ropes," which was shown on TLC. I leave tomorrow for Detroit--actually Lansing--to mix the sound for "If I Had a Hammer." Having a complete mixed soundtrack is pretty close to done. That's it for now.

Josh

Name: Benedict  
E-mail: bdabrowski@tra.com

Dear Josh:

If you're shooting a scene that involves intercutting medium shots between two (or more) principle characters, are the two actors filmed simultaneously (is there a camera filming for each actor for every take) or do you film them seperately? I am told that all of on actor will be shot, and then the next. Wouldn't that make continuity preservation a bit more difficult? Thanks. Running Time was cool; Blade Runner sucked.

Dear Benedict:

I explained this a couple of questions back. If you want decent lighting and sound, you shoot one character at a time, thus allowing the D.P. and the sound man to concentrate on a single character and make them look and sound good. If you shoot both sides simultaneously the lighting becomes so diffuse it looks like a sit-com. Yes, it makes for continuity discrepancies, but it always has. Good lighting and sound are more important than good continuity.

Josh

Name: Rickey  
E-mail: rickeya@jps.net

Hi Josh,

Just an FYI. Somewhere farther down on this page, somebody mentioned the Princess Bride bit in FHTBT. Joxer does sword fights the king left handed, they complement each other's talent, then he say something like "but I am not left handed" and switches to his right. Straight out of Princess Bride.

Dear Rickey:

I spoke with Ted yesterday and asked him that very question, and got that very answer. I feel like the gag predates both of those things, though, but I can't say from where.

Josh

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

Josh

How does Bruce feel about the cancellation of JOAT (relieved I should think)? Do you know if he will now revive the Autolycus character on XWP?

Dear Alan:

It's not officially cancelled yet. I don't think the final word comes until September.

Josh

Name: Joe Murphy  
E-mail: joemurphy.1@email.com

Dear Josh:

Your comments on Blade Runner reminded me of a time in college I watched the Director's Cut with a friend of mine. In this version of the movie, a reason is definitely given as to why Harrison Ford's character, Deckard, is able to survive his encounters with the replicants.

Deckard, like Rachael (Sean Young) is a replicant - only he doesn't know it.

Even in the Director's Cut, the message is subtle, but it's there.

Hope you're enjoying your vacation.

Joe Murphy



Dear Joe:

I appreciate that "Blade Runner" has its fans--the co-webmaster of this site, Gerry Kissell is the webmaster on the big "Blade Runner" website [Bladezone.com](http://Bladezone.com), which is a MUCH more popular site than mine--but I really think the film has a lousy screenplay and is a bloody bore, regular version or director's cut. If you like it, God bless you.

Josh

Name: Tanya  
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

You've been very kind and patient in answering my numerous questions. I'm one of those fun dates that stays to read all of the credits. I've found your answers very interesting and I've enjoyed finding out answers to some of the questions I've always wondered about. Unfortunately, I have many more. Is there a book that would have some of the following info, example: What are the responsibilities of the producer, executive producer etc.? Basically what are the responsibilities of the people listed in the credits and how do they budget that? I think I'm the same age as you, yes, we went to school together separately, so it's not for a term paper. I also show up before concerts to watch them set up, I need help.

Thanks,  
Tanya

Dear Tanya:

It's OK, I understand. Try reading Leslie Halliwell's "Filmgoer's Companion" and let me know how it goes. Ephram Katz has a good Film Dictionary, as well.

Josh

Name: Yasha  
E-mail: [angel\\_dome@hotmail.com](mailto:angel_dome@hotmail.com)

Dear Mr. Becker,

I couldn't find anything about RUNNING TIME in the "Film Work" section of this page - why is that?

Seen the US-Cover of THOU SHALL NOT KILL, EXCEPT... - is the VHS still available in the US? Where? Only got a bad quality Dutch copy, the domestic release here (Germany) is heavily cut! Thanks for your time!

Yours  
Yasha

Dear Yasha:

Why couldn't you find anything about "Running Time" on the Film Work page? Perhaps you weren't wearing your glasses, or just as you clicked on Film Work you lost your internet connection, or maybe you just weren't

paying attention. Try again. And yes, the VHS of "Thou . . ." is still available in the the U.S. (there's a link on the front page to that). The DVD is supposed to be out in September.

Josh

Name: Blake Eckard  
E-mail: bseckard@hotmail.com

Dear Mr. Becker,

Must say I really like the site. I stumbled on it because I just ordered RUNNING TIME from Movies Unlimited and thought I might see what else I could find on the film. Really enjoyed the EVIL DEAD journal(hey, that'd make a great indie film!) as well as your negative reviews of all that hollywood dreck. But, one thing I can't believe is that you actually liked THE SIXTH SENSE! I absolutely hated, hated, hated that show! I know my opinion is in the minority, but Best Picture? The two best films of the year weren't even nominated, BRINGING OUT THE DEAD and THE STRAIT STORY. Anyway, got to rambling there, my question: In 1998 I made my 1st feature film. Now, over 2 years later, after countless rejection letters from film festivals around the globe I still haven't been able to sit in a theatre and watch my movie with an audience, let alone actually sell it or even generate any such interest from any buyers. How long did it take for you to get TSNK...E out of your hands, and are there any interesting horror stories you could recall to bring up the spirits of a, thus far, wanna be indie filmmaker?

P.S. Looking forward to RUNNING TIME and now, IF I HAD A HAMMER.

Dear Blake:

I thought "The Sixth Sense" worked wonderfully on the level it was trying to work on and fooled me completely. It will never fool me again, though, so I don't think it will have much lasting power. Regarding TSNK...E, the whole bloody thing was a nightmare, which is all amply illustrated in my essay "[The Making of 'TSNK...E'.](#)" Check it out.

Josh

Name: Tanya  
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

Thanks for the picture, looks like you were having a blast! Okay, anyway, what is the difference when the credits say, "written by, story by and teleplay by" ?

Actually, I envy your trip to Oregon, sounds great to be away from a large city.

Thanks,  
Tanya

Dear Tanya:

Well, a screenplay is for a movie and a teleplay is for a TV movie or show. The story for a movie or TV show

is sometimes based on someone else's story, which can be a short story, or a treatment, or even a detailed outline. Occasionally, though, the person who wrote the first draft of the script, that was subsequently rewritten by others, will get the story credit (like Tarantino on "Natural Born Killers").

Josh

Name: Gentle Ben

E-mail:

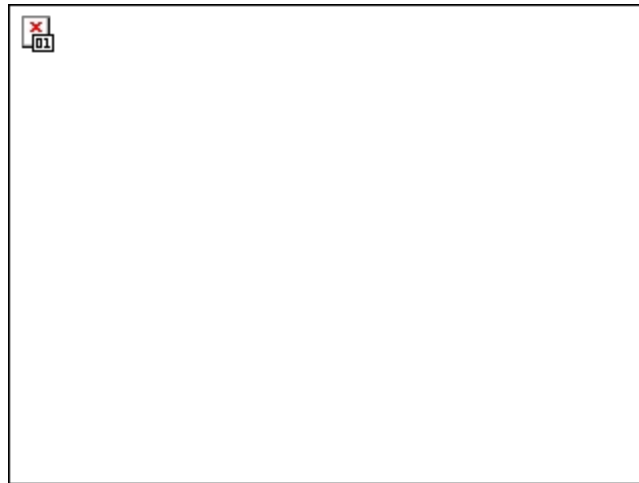
Hey Josh,

So, how do you like the wilds of the great northwest? What are you and the BruceMeister doing all day for fun? Make sure to put some pictures up for us, so we can breath the fresh air, too. :-)

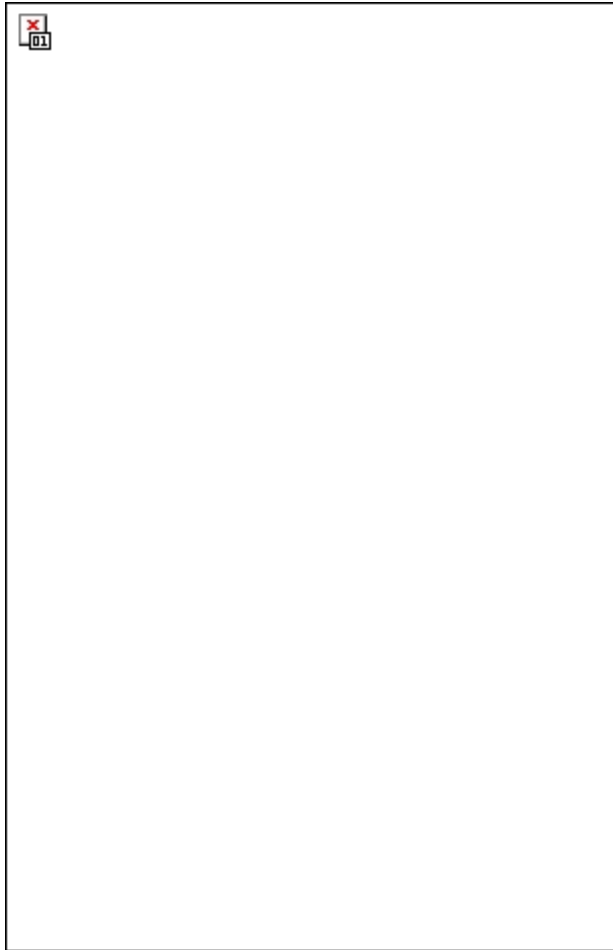
All the best,  
Ben

Dear Ben:

Bruce, his family, and I did very serious things, like float down a river on inner-tubes, dive off tall rocks into cool swimming holes, and go bowling. Here is a shot of Bruce in the historic town of Jacksonville, Oregon.



Here's a picture of me in a tree in Oregon.



Josh

Name: Tanya  
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

In reference to clipshows, I've always read that they are used to save time and money. Is this something that most shows do or is this something unique to Herc and Xena? I don't watch much TV, so this may be a common practice. It seems that proper budgeting would be a better solution. Of course, I'm sure it's not as simple as that, but they've done more than one. Also, in an episode such as the one Renee O'Connor directed, a clip show, are the clips used chosen by the director, if not, by whom, and how would that all be put together by the director?

Thanks,  
Tanya

Dear Tanya:

Clip shows are an old idea used by many, many shows in the past (even "The Simpsons" have done them several times). Which clips are used is written into the script. In the one clip show I directed, "Hercules in the Maze of the Minotaur," I re-edited all the clips (with the editor, of course) to make them a bit snappier. As far

as budgeting is concerned, generally the clip show is planned on and part of the season's line-up from the beginning. This allows the producers to spend more money on the other episodes.

Josh

Name: Corinne  
E-mail: liberty5-3000@startrekmail.com

Dear Josh,

In many movies and TV shows, you sometimes get to see certain "tributes" to movies and such, like as the obvious reference to the movie "The Princess Bride" in the Xena episode "For Him The Bell Tolls", and the shots from the movie "Sparticus" in the episode "The Royal Academy of the Performing Bards".

Are these "tributes" put in by request of the director, thus making them a subject of his own personal taste?

Thanks.  
.Corinne from Israel

Shalom Corinne:

Putting in clips is an entirely different thing than doing an homage. Regarding the clips from "Spartacus," I believe that was Rob Tapert's idea that he told the writers to put in. Because they were working for Universal they had an easy time getting clips from Universal pictures. As far as the "obvious reference to 'The Princess Bride'" in "For Him the Bell Tolls," I'm very familiar with "The Princess Bride," and even read the book when it came out, but I don't know what you're referring to.

Josh

Name: bill  
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

I just watched the Big Sleep with Bogie and noticed it wasn't on your favorite film list. Did you not like this one? I enjoyed it very much. I can't help but get over how all the detective movies have dark lighting and every scene is at night. Do you happen to know how many different actors have played Marlowe? Bogie, Mitchum come to mind and Danny Glover is the last one I can think of but it seems like I read there was going to be or will be a new one.

Dear Bill:

All those Raymond Chandler things are pretty good, but I'm not really a fan of detective stuff, and Chandler's plots are always very convoluted. I'm not at home now and don't have access to my books, but regarding who has played Phillip Marlowe, let's see . . . Bogart in "The Big Sleep," Robert Mitchum in the remake, Dick Powell, Robert Montgomery, George Montgomery, James Garner, and that's all I can think of at this time.

Josh

Name: Great White Hope  
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

If you don't mind me asking, where are you going for the next several weeks? Is it a directing gig?

Thanks,  
Keep on keeping on!

Dear Great White:

I'm way the heck up in the wilds of Oregon visiting my buddy, Bruce Campbell. No directing, just vacationing. Man, is it pretty up here.

Josh

Name: DREW  
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

When editing a movie, do you think keeping a good pace and rythmn is more important than having a string of great scenes that don't really flow within the contents of the film? Thanks.

Dear Drew:

It's a balance that one must find. I don't think it's any issue at all if your script is well-written, then you won't be shooting anything you don't absolutely need. My new movie, "Hammer," may turn out to be a piece of crap, but every scene in the script is in the movie. Every scene in the script of "RT" is in the movie. In "Hammer" I did trim a couple of scenes by a few lines, however, to keep them moving. Quite frankly, I think it's an insane waste of time and money to shoot whole scenes that get cut out. If you have useless scenes you should be able to spot them in the script and eliminate them there.

Josh

Name: Daniel Neumann  
E-mail: [neumann@fu-tong.com](mailto:neumann@fu-tong.com)

Hi Josh!

I'm a fan of yours since getting a copy of Lunatics here in Germany (which I bought then because of Mr. Campbell). Since having bought Running Time I'm visiting your site daily (well, weekly). I'm into movies myself and would love you to look at my page ([www.fu-tong.com/neumann-films](http://www.fu-tong.com/neumann-films)). Too bad it's completely in German but I don't have the time translating it. If you need help translating some dialogue into German (eg for your ww1-movie), please contact me. I've a question, too. We have a discussion about "interactive movies" which I really think they completely go into the wrong direction. A movie wants to tell a story to the

audience. It's wrong to integrate the audience into the development of the characters. What do you think?

Thanks,  
Daniel

Dear Daniel:

Gutentag. I completely agree with you that interactive is entirely the wrong direction for movies. Storytelling is not an interactive activity--you sit there and pay attention to the storyteller whether they're sitting on rock by the campfire, on a stage performing a play, or giving you the story in a movie or TV show. As far as choosing alternate endings, that entire undermines the whole concept. I believe that we humans love and need stories because, during the course of the story, there absolutely is a God, or let's say a greater power--the author--that is guiding these characters to their appropriate destinies. And since we all suspect that there is no God and life is merely chaos, stories reassure us that we will all arrive at our proper and appropriate destinies, and there ought to be nothing interactive about this process, other than the audience paying attention.

Josh

Name: Bad Luck Schleprock  
E-mail:

Dear Josh,

Great news about TSNKE coming out on DVD. Will Stryker's War be included on it? I remember there was something about getting music clearance on the sound track.

best wishes,  
BLS

Dear BLS:

I sent Anchor Bay the Super-8 version and I've never heard about it again, so I kinda doubt it. Sorry. It really ought to be on it.

Josh

Name: Thomas  
E-mail: [tomihawk@tomihawk.com](mailto:tomihawk@tomihawk.com)

Dear Josh:

I was wondering what you think about director's cuts? Do they add anything to the film or is it just a studio marketing trick to get people to buy two copies of the film?

I remember a director (can't remember who) saying once that directors should stay behind the camera and leave the editing up to the editors. Directors have a biased view of the film and want to keep shots in the final cut no matter how awful they are. I know a few people who think the original version of Blade Runner is much better than the director's cut.

I know your films fall into a different category because it's your script and production from the start.

So, are director's cuts a waste of time or have you any examples of films that have benefited from it?

Thomas

Dear Thomas:

I think director's cuts can occasionally have value. In the case of "Blade Runner" I don't think it makes the slightest bit of difference as the film sucks in both versions. I don't need to get a hundred comments on this, either. There is absolutely no reason Ford isn't dead after his first encounter with a replicant, nor the second, nor the third. But it has a nice score. Anyway, someone like Sam Raimi, for instance, is a mad editor that frequently cuts out good scenes for the sake of pace. I was in a very funny scene (not due to me, mind you) in "Army of Darkness" with Doug Sills, who is now starring in the musical "The Scarlett Pimpernel," that I don't even think made his director's cut. The new cut of "Touch of Evil" based on Welles' editing notes was greatly improved. There's one scene I'd love to put back into "Lunatics," but alas, the footage no longer exists. For the most part, however, they are just a sales ploy.

Josh

Name: Andy

E-mail: skanelli@aol.com

Dear Josh:

You are constantly saying how studio-made films are terrible and the Hollywood system is crap. But don't you think that there are a helluva lot more good studio films than indie films (I don't see many indie movies on yer list)? After all any idiot with a camera can make an indie film (and I have seen most indie films where the director has NO concept of film-making). I know there is a lot of bullshit in the industry, but IMHO, the ones who bitch about it are the ones who can't negotiate their way through it. In some cases it's actually better for both the director and the movie to have to go through these things. Look at a lot of contemporary film-makers: Martin Scorsese, Stephen Spielberg, Terry Gilliam, Ridley Scott, Trey Parker, Spike Jonze, and even Kevin Smith (I could go on and on). You don't have to like their films, but there is one thing that they have in the industry: creative control (at the expense of the studio).

Dear Andy:

I simply disagree. Not that indies are better than studio pictures, but that either one is any good. I don't give a crap what any of the afore mentioned filmmakers do as none of them have made a decent film in 10 years, or in some cases, like Spike Jonze, Trey Parker, Terry Gilliam or Kevin Smith, have EVER made a decent film. I also resent your comment that anyone can pick up a camera and be an independent filmmaker. It's VERY difficult making a feature film. As the old expression goes, "It's hard to make a good film and it's hard to make a bad film." If you haven't done it, you haven't got a clue.

Josh

Name: Gord

E-mail: gord@gordzajac.com



Josh,

To quote the immortal John Wayne: "Don't let the bastards get you down."

Take care,  
Gord

Dear Gord:

I do my best, but sometimes it still gets to me. Thanks for the kind thoughts.

Josh

Name: Kain  
E-mail: [webmaster@deadites.net](mailto:webmaster@deadites.net)

Josh,

My name is Kain and I'm the webmaster of Deadites Online. I'm writing to see if we could possibly arrange an online interview with you. We have already conducted a successful interview with Tom Sullivan and are working on one with Scott Spiegel and possibly Ellen Sandweiss. If you are interested please let us know. We would love to hear you got to say.

Kain -Webmaster [Deadites Online](#)

Dear Kain:

Sure, but I'm out of town for the next several weeks. Try back at the end of July.

Josh

Name: Tony Mitchell  
E-mail: [tmitchell@jbwere.com.au](mailto:tmitchell@jbwere.com.au)

Hello Josh,

I managed to watch "Marty" for the first time the other day and I liked it very much - mainly because it only went for 84 minutes. Now, once again from a structural point of view (sorry for going on about this but I need to learn) this is how I saw it: Act I - setup - Everyone tells Marty he needs to find a girl. Act II - confrontation - Marty finds a girl and now everyone tells him she's a dog and that he should stay single. Act III - resolution - Marty decides everyone can go to hell and he'll stick with his girl. Now Act III in this case went for about 1 minute but I guess the point is that it worked, huh? Is this how you saw it?

Dear Tony:

Yes, that's exactly how I see it. It's a very short act 3, but, like you said, it works, so what the hell.

Josh

Name: Tanya  
E-mail:

Dear Josh,

Success is in the eye of the beholder, very relative. I'm sure you haven't been idle, just frustrated. I've certainly enjoyed the Xena episodes you've directed, they've been very well done. That, in itself, is an accomplishment that many directors would love to say they've done. You've contributed to the success of that show regardless of your future with them. I would like to see you successfully come to an understanding with your friends on that show, just from a personal standpoint, I hope you do. I think you're a good guy.

Thanks ,  
Tanya

Dear Tanya:

Thank you, Tanya. I actually do try my best, for whatever it's worth.

Josh

Name: Carrie  
E-mail: cari24@home.net

Mr. Becker,

First, I want to commend you on your work on Xena Warrior Princess. I enjoy the show very much and I hate to hear that the 6th season will be the last. I was wondering if there might be director's cut versions of the series available on VHS or DVD. I would appreciate the info.

Thank you for your time

Carrie H.

Dear Carrie:

I think that there are episodes of Xena on tape (I don't have any), but I can't imagine anyone putting up any money to recut the shows.

Josh

Name: Scott  
E-mail:

Josh,

You constantly complain about how you have to kiss ass in Hollywood to make it, and that you won't do it, (seems like you are trying to justify your lack of success in the business IMHO) then you turn around and beg family, friends, producers, and anyone who will listen to finance your films; none of which have ever made a profit, what gives? I mean, don't you think you need to come down off of your high horse just a little bit and get real. Geesh, you do realize that filmmaking isn't just your private jerk-off session, right? You rant and you rave, and talk about art, but really, what have you contributed? You are in your 40's, man. Don't you think it's time to grow up and quit complaining? You are getting too old to act like a boy with a camera in his dad's garage. All your friends are making it now. They have families, homes, businesses, and yet you rarely have a girlfriend, still live in an apartment, beg your family for money, and scrape up the crumbs of any menial TV work offered to you by friends; and all you can talk about is how good the good old days in Hollywood were. I hope you really take the time to stop and look at yourself for a moment. It ain't gonna get any better until you change your attitude. You're not John Wayne, man. No one makes it alone, especially in Hollywood.

Dear Scott:

Golly, that's good, solid attack on my whole life. And everything was so pleasant today for the most part. Well, I guess I'm guilty on all counts. Now what? Do I get dragged off kicking and screaming to a pit of snakes?

Josh

Name: Tony Mitchell  
E-mail: [tmitchell@jbwere.com.au](mailto:tmitchell@jbwere.com.au)

Hi Josh,

Just a query about the Truman Show which you described as basically a one act film (like Pleasantville). Now please don't think I'm a big fan of the movie but from a structural point of view I always thought that it followed the plan pretty well, i.e Act I sets up the story: Truman lives in his fake world and then discovers the truth. Act II is the confrontation Truman experiences when he tries to get out. Act III is the resolution when Truman finally succeeds and escapes. Isn't this the way you saw it or am I missing something?

Dear Tony:

Except it didn't work that way. Truman is suspicious, and rightly so, from the very first scene when a movie light drops out of the sky. He then becomes more and more suspicious for the rest of the movie, and finally leaves at the very end. The only point of no going back is leaving and that's the ending. A guy realizes his in a phony world and leaves isn't a story. If he left at the end of act one, then he'd have something to confront-- and real life is way worse than fake life, so maybe he decides to come back, but they've already cast someone new. Anyway, all you've got is a set-up.

Josh

Name: S.C.  
E-mail: [scornett@yahoo.com](mailto:scornett@yahoo.com)

Dear Captain Becker,

What are your favorite 8-tracks? Do you own a betamax VCR? Any news on the TSNKE DVD? Pants.

Truly,

-S.C.

Dear S.C.:

I actually had an 8-track recorder, which can be seen being destroyed in "Lunatics." My favorite 8-track was probably "Meddle" by Pink Floyd. I never owned a betamax deck. "TSNKE" is supposed to be out on DVD in Sept., or so they tell me.

Josh

Name: S.C.

E-mail: [scornett@yahoo.com](mailto:scornett@yahoo.com)

Mr. Becker,

Sorry, one more thing that came to mind that I'd like to hear your opinion on. You had Female Trouble and Pink Flamingos in your list of favorite movies, but not Desperate Living. I thought Desperate Living was, at the very least, on par with those, if not better. Did you think it didn't measure up, or have you not seen it?

Also, what do you think of the later era John Waters (Serial Mom, Pecker)? Thanks!

TSNKE for all mankind,

-S.C.

Dear S.C.:

I haven't seen "Desperate Living." As to the later John Waters films, I think they're all junk--once he stopped being gross and shocking he had nothing else left.

Josh

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