

Josh Becker DGA

Directing From The Edge



Q & A Archive
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Name: David ReVelle
E-mail: davelrla@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

Do you have any thoughts on the late Stanley Kubrick? Are you excited about his upcoming movie "Eyes Wide Shut"? He was quoted in Newsweek as calling it his best film ever.

Also, are you excited about the soon to be released Star Wars prequel "The Phantom Menace"?

And lastly, you've said that you keep a running list of all the movies you have seen. Could you e-mail me a copy of this list? I would like to see it.

Thanks for answering questions for your fans.

Dear David:

Ah, some questions that will truly prove how big of a curmudgeon I am. Stanley Kubrick's talent--which was impressive--lasted from 1955 and "The Killing" to 1970 and "A Clockwork Orange." Everything he did in the preceding 30 years has been borderline worthless, and I have very little doubt that "Eyes Wide Shut" will continue and complete this trend. My one interest is potentially seeing Nicole Kidman naked. In regard to Kubrick saying that this is his best movie ever, that's what every director says about their most recent project.

I am not waiting for "Star Wars: The Phantom Menace" at all--not even a little. George Lucas hasn't come anywhere near a good movie (unless he rented one) in 20 years. The first "Star Wars" film was fun, but doesn't hold up; "Empire Strikes Back" was over-cut, melodramatic and so-so at best; "Return of the Jedi" was one of the worst films I've ever seen in my life (putting it in the same awful category as "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom"). Now, honestly, why on Earth would anyone think the 4th entry in the series would be any good? It's just like the bozos in the AOL movie chat rooms getting all excited about "Batman & Robin" before it was released (or any other big Hollywood picture they are expected to go see and, of course, do exactly as they are told), then are bummed afterwards because it sucked. Look at the precedents. Has Lucas been involved with anything that was any good at all

since "Raiders?" Well, that was 18 years ago. Since anything he wants to make is automatically financed, if he had one decent idea in the interim don't you suppose we'd have seen it? Obviously, Mr. Lucas has no decent ideas and in lieu of one has fallen back on making "Star Wars" films. My response is a big, groaning yawn.

Josh

Name:David Collupy
E-mail: dmcollupy@usa.net

Dear Josh:

I am very excited to see "Running Time." I am certain that I would like to own this movie. I collect movies on the DVD format. Is or will "Running Time" be available on DVD? Also, I work in film and TV. If you ever need anybody for anything, just email me. I'm good like that. :)

Dear David:

"RT" won't be on DVD until I make some kind of distribution deal. It's not economically feasible for me to have the film compressed for DVD and have the disks burned. If you want to be first person on your block to own this film, it's going to be on tape.

Josh

Name:Shivesh Kumar
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Hi Josh...do you have any plans on showing some of your work here at the University of CA, Los Angeles? I would love to see Running Time here, or organize a filmfest showcasing your work. What do you think?

Dear Shivesh:

No one at UCLA as approached me to show any of my films. If you'd like to attempt to set something up, be my guest. I have 35mm prints of all three of my films and the "Lunatics" print is brand new.

Josh

Name:John Pilon
E-mail: FourK77@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Do you accept original screenplays for consideration?

John Pilon

Dear John:

No, I do not. Original, adapted or otherwise.

Josh

Name:Kristin

E-mail: DARKTOWER14@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

I have a buch of questions to ask you. But first I wanna commend you on Running Time I just got it yesterday (it came in a second may i add)!I've already watched it three times and I have all my friends jealous that i own it so I feel proud. It is one of the best movies I've seen in a while certainly better then everything that is out in theaters right now. now for my questions.

frist where in the world can I find Lunatics:A Love Story???????? I've looked and looked and can't find it I really really want to see it. i can't wait for Thou shalt not kill...except to be rereleased. From the trailer on Running Time it looks cute. The murders look pretty cool. My second question isn't really my question my friend wants to know if you personally hand write the shipping labels on the Running Packages? I know it's a stupid question but she seriously wants to know. I was at the chat that you did on yahoo you are so nice and were really cool it was fun talkin to you. Well there you have it my questions and comments thanks a buch for answering them.

Dear Kristin:

I'm very pleased you enjoyed the film. In regard to "Lunatics," it's distressing to me that it's not available. I have had my lawyer try to get to anyone in charge at Sony (who owns the film), but apparently there is no one in charge at Sony. Anchor Bay, that re-released "Thou" and "Evil Dead," would like to re-release "Lunatics," but they couldn't get to anyone in charge, either. It reminds me of "Apocalypse Now" when Martin Sheen is looking for the commanding officer and can't find one. Sheen asks a soldier, "Do you know who the C.O. is?" and the soldier replies, "Ain't you?" Anyway, I'm seriously considering selling the film right here even though one and all have told me I shouldn't. Regarding "Thou Shalt Not Kill . . . Except," it's already in re-release. Check your local Blockbuster, or go to their website and order it (it's \$12.95). And finally, yes, that's my handwriting on the "RT" labels.

Josh

Name:Heath Opper

E-mail: heo96001@uconnvm.uconn.edu

Dear Josh:

Hi. I was wondering what you thought of director John Woo's work and his style of directing. Also do you have a favorite John Woo film?

Thanks,

Heath

Dear Heath:

I like John Woo, but I don't like any of his films. When I was developing "Lunatics" for Renaissance Pictures, John and his producer, Terrance Chang, were developing "Hard Target." We used to run into each other at the copier all the time and he's a very pleasant, bright man. As far as his films go, however, I don't think that there is a believable moment in any of them. I think his use of slo-mo is cliched, predictable and pretentious, and I absolutely can't stand people firing 100 shots out of pistol when we all know it has 6 bullets, possibly 12 if it's automatic. I would much rather see, as in John Frankenheimer's "Black Sunday," a guy firing his six bullets, then having to reload while running and dropping the damn things all over the place.

Josh

Name:lyrael

E-mail: lyrael@execpc.com

Dear Josh:

Do you ever review independ manuscripts/story concepts? I know you've said many times that you enjoy the process of writing about and producing films that are based on concepts YOU feel strongly about/interested in -

But would you ever consider taking a look at the work of a totally unknown/non-published/non-acclaimed writer who thinks she has a unique story/something interesting to say?

Dear lyrael:

The question is, to what end? The bottom line is that I'm not going to make a film out of it or buy it from you, so all that remains is my critique and, quite frankly, I'm not a script-reading service. I do wish you the very best of luck, however.

Josh

Name:Jack

E-mail:

Dear Josh:

What did you think of the film, LA Confidential?

Jack

Dear Jack:

I think it's one of the better pictures of the past several years. The period detail is very good and I was interested most of the way through. I think the last 15-20 minutes kind of blow, however. I really wish it had not degenerated into a shoot-'em-up. I'm also a little disturbed when Australians (or any other foreigners) are cast as Americans--is there a shortage of American actors? Nevertheless, in the scheme of recent films, "L.A. Confidential" is one of the better ones.

Josh

Name:Humblepie

E-mail: humblepie@aol.com

Dearest Josh:

Are you and Sam Raimi good friends? And why does the Xena show constantly change directors? I just don't understand the purpose of doing it. Doesn't that make it really difficult for Lucy and Renee? Lastly, are Lucy and Renee easy to work with, or do they have big egos? What I mean is...do they take direction well from you.

Thanks a lot,
Humblepie

Dear Humblepie:

Sam and I were never best friends. Way back when, I was best buddies with Sam's older brother, Ivan, and Sam was simply his annoying little brother. Ted was an infant at that point. In the late 70s and early 80s Sam and I did some hanging out, but after "Evil Dead" was released and Sam became something of a hot property, our paths diverged. In the past several years, since he got married and had kids, I don't see him hardly at all.

I don't know why TV shows change directors as often as they do, unless it's to impress upon the directors that TV is a producer's medium. As Rob Gillies, the production designer on Herc & Xena, once said, "Getting new directors all the time is like reinventing the wheel every week."

I find Lucy and Renee a dream to work with. They both take direction beautifully, and entirely in their own ways. Renee is open to just about anything, whereas Lucy has pretty definite ideas about each scene. Either way is fine with me.

Josh

Name:jordan steinberg

E-mail: jola@erols.com

Dear Josh:

hi, can i ask you what you did before you made it as a director? i have a friend who directed some short films that showed great promise. he gave up on his dream because he had a wife and needed to make money. what advice could you give him about following his dream. thanks in advance for your response. keep up the good work.

jordan

Dear Jordan:

I've done quite a few other jobs: selling furniture, cab driver, process server, security guard, selling cameras, working in several bookstores, as well as working on many, many film crews as a production assistant.

There is a natural attrition rate in people desiring to be film directors. Most simply drop out and go into more stable fields. Some stick it out further, then drop out and take up one of the supporting filmmaking positions, like sound editors, assistant camera people, dolly grips, etc. Tenacity is a big part of being a filmmaker and there's nothing I can say that will help someone else achieve this. Your friend may well be better off where he is.

Josh

Name:Irishman

E-mail: irishman91@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Is Renee O'Connor engaged?

The Irishman

Dear Irishman:

Yes, she is, to a New Zealander named Steve who seems very nice.

Josh

Name:Irishman

E-mail: irishman91@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Are you scheduled to do any Xena eps this year? How much advanced notice do you normally receive?

The Irishman

Dear Irishman:

The 4th season is about to wrap shooting. I am not booked for any more this season. We'll see what happens next season. I usually get a couple of weeks notice.

Josh

Name:Peggy Sue

E-mail: peggysue3@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Are you married? And is it really true that you used to date Renee O'Connor? Did she break up with you, or was it the other way around?

Peggy

Dear Peggy:

Is this a joke? I only wish that I ever dated Renee. And no, I'm not married.

Josh

Name:Sebastion

E-mail: sebstzuk@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I was just trying to get a rise out of you. I love your angry letters and I hadn't read any in awhile. I'm sorry if I was an incovience.

Dear Sebastion:

Well, you pushed the right button.

Josh

Name:John Forde

E-mail: jforde@wppost,depaul.edu

Dear Josh:

How is the folk music project going?

Creatively speaking, "Running Time" was a success (I've seen it and it was inspiring, congratulations).

Financially speaking, how is "Running Time" doing?

Keep up the good work.

Dear John:

I'm glad you liked "RT." I've begun pre-pre-production on the folk story, entitled, "If I Had a Hammer." I have begun the Tom Sawyer, picket fence approach of trying to generate enthusiasm for the project as I enlist my crew members. So far, I've got the co-producer from "Running Time," as well as the DP, the Casting Director, the Production Coordinator, I've got an Art Director, an Editor with his own non-linear system, and I've got a cool sound facility in Michigan that wants to do my post sound. I intend to begin shooting in September or October.

How is "RT" doing financially? I haven't sold 200 copies yet. It will take 3000 to break even.

Josh

Name:Christine

E-mail: creek84@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Hi! I was just curious if you could give me a summary as to how to do editing for a film. Thanks a bunch

Dear Christine:

Editing is a big, complex subject that can't be summed up in a few words--there is a lot of technique involved. I suggest reading "On Film Editing" by Edward Dymtryk and "When the Shooting Stops, the Cutting Begins" by Ralph Rosenblum.

Josh

Name:Sebastian

E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Why are you such a dildo to your fans? I must request that you apologize to me. By the way, your last episode of Xena shampooed my nuts. You criticize Spielberg for his epic pictures, but you direct a show about a scantily clad lesbian romping in Greece. What the fuck?

Dear, dear Sebastian:

I sense a certain note of anger in your tone. What is it that you think you're owed an apology for? What if I worked in a furniture store (as I used to), would I not be allowed to like or dislike the movies I care

to? What about film critics? They've never made any movies at all, should they then have to like everything they see? My working on Xena, or even making my own independent films, has nothing to do with what I think about other things. If you disagree with my opinion on something, take a stance. Insulting what I do for a living simply makes you look like a putz. If in fact you're not a putz, prove otherwise.

Josh

Name: Stormy

E-mail: SanStormy@aol.com

Dear Josh:

After seeing Running Time (which I really like and have now watched 6 times) I started looking through your website to see what else you had done. I was really interested in Stryker's War after reading the script, so I recently purchased the video release. I almost sent it back without watching it because some guy told me it was an exploitation film.

I didn't like the sound of that and he never told me what it meant. So I asked this guy who runs an internet thing and is an expert about Sam Raimi and all of you guys, and he said it meant that the film was made just to exploit people's thirst for violence, blood, and sex. He said Raimi wrote everything that way and all of you are like that because you want to make money and that's it. He said I'm too romantic if I think Raimi or you or any of your buddies makes a film to say anything insightful or whatever.

I was pretty mad for awhile because that's not the kind of filmmaker I want to spend my money on and I always thought you guys were cooler than that. But then I started thinking about stuff I've read on your website. You definitely express values and obviously think a LOT.

So now I want to know what it means if someone says Stryker's War is "a cool exploitation concept" (that's exactly what he said.) Does that really mean anything or was he just using big words? I took him kind of seriously because he seemed to know a lot about you and the film, but you never know who to believe on the internet. And I don't think that "expert" I asked knew what he was talking about. I should have just asked you first but I hate to bother you. Sorry if this is a dumb question but it's been bugging me for weeks.

Thanks for putting your writing up for us to read, and thanks for answering questions.

Stormy

Dear Stormy:

"Stryker's War," by the way, is the original title of the feature and the title of the Super-8 version starring Bruce Campbell. The feature version is called "Thou Shalt Not Kill . . . Except." And yes, it's an exploitation movie, no question about it. I always thought that it was a good exploitation idea, but it most certainly is exploitation in its basic form -- where the enjoyment is based on watching people get killed (like "Saving Private Ryan"). Most films of this sort are about innocent people getting killed, however in mine it is the guilty people getting it (the Manson family). That was the only way I could manage to make an exploitation film, and after that I stopped. Neither "Lunatics" nor "Running Time" are exploitation films and neither one was made specifically to make money (not that I don't always want to make the money back, mind you). I'm not ashamed of having made "Thou," but I did not

pursue that route of filmmaking. In regard to your "Sam Raimi expert" and his assertion that we "only want to make money," I can't speak for the others, but for myself I heartily say, "Fuck him!" I guess that's why I decided to make "Running Time" in real time, black & white and 70 minutes long, because all I want to do is make money.

Josh

Name:Andrew Trepanier
E-mail: JTrepp@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Just to set things straight, I wasn't referring to your gaining success within the Hollywood community. Hollywood is a damn make-or-buy jungle and I think it's responsible for most 'financially successful' film makers' creative suffocation. I was referring to your success in that the films that you've worked on are noticed. I don't think there is one of my friends who doesn't know about "Evil Dead" or "Running Time". For a movie that you've worked on to reach a boonie land like Ottawa and inspire people is my definition of success. So I'm not taking back my congratulations. Anyways, I was still hoping that you could answer my previous question. What do you think would be a good way to allocate funds for my first production? Should I take out a loan? Can I get a grant?(ha ha) Should I ask Grandpa? What?

Thanks for your time,
Andrew

Dear Andrew:

I don't mean to sound like an English teacher, but you are using the word "allocate" incorrectly. Allocate means assign or give out, you want to take in money, not give it out. Since getting the funds stops 99% of all potential filmmakers, that's one of the two big tricks. The other big trick is using that money to make a movie that has some value, as opposed to just making a movie, any movie. All three of my feature films were financed through limited partnerships with money raised from absolutely anyone that would cough green. Family, friends, friends of friends, etc. That's the game; how do you convince people to invest in something that they can be reasonably assured that they won't get their money back from? And you really MUST inform everyone that this is a high-risk investment. It ain't easy, my friend, but if it was everyone would do it.

Good luck,

Josh

Name:Pankaj Mehta
E-mail: firstlove@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Let me introduce myself. My name is Pankaj Mehta, 23 years old and I live in India. I have completed my Graduation (Bachelors Degree) in 1996 and since then I am working with a consulting firm. Its been already 2 years and I have been promoted as the Assistant Director of the company.

I am putting my best into this company so that it can grow even further. But still my interest in the field of films and advertising has always been affecting a part of my work. I am very keen to join some director or work under a production company. While surfing the net, to get some information on it, I could locate your email address and name and thought you could be a person who can help me.

I wonder if you can take me under your company to work as an assistant/intern, but if you can nothing like it. If you require a copy of my resume, please do not hesitate to inform me. I have been always going to the Television shows, game-shows and my interest got even more firm.

Awaiting a reply, which I think will be positive.

Thank you,

Regards

Pankaj Mehta
Age: 23 years
Height : 6'.1"

Dear Pankaj:

My company consists entirely of me. I have neither full-time nor part-time employees. The only time I hire people is when I'm actually making a movie. This has so far occurred three times in my life--for a few weeks in 1984, a few weeks in 1989, and a few weeks in 1996. I am planning on making another movie this year, hopefully in September or October. At that time I will hire a crew of local people that all have cars and know their way around L.A. As a note for you and the others coming to this website, this is NOT how you get a job in the film business. The best way, I think, is to get very good at something, like lighting or effects or editing. Keep in mind that L.A. is absolutely lousy with people wanting to be in the film business, we don't need to import them from other countries unless they have already proven that they are particularly talented.

Josh

Name:Larry Benson
E-mail: idontbelieve@email.msn.com

Dear Josh:

I read your "Cycles" article and it occurred to me that you'd probably like to do to others what was done to you--namely, option my script, then turn around and re-option it. Am I right? Or, am I right? Seriously, Josh--this is no josh, Josh--can I email you my written pitch? My script's called "Killer Diller" and it's about two wacky lovers who suspect each other of killing her husband, and secretly contrive conflicting screwball schemes to once and for all prove the other's guilt or innocence. If you had not already taken it I might have called it "Lunatics: A Love Story." I like most of the same movies you like and I've seen about twice as many as you. So, waddya say, Josh? Can I pitch you your next film?

Dear Larry:

With a due respect, and wishing you the very best of luck, no thanks. I have scenplays coming out the

wazoo. I'll deal with mine and you deal with yours. You say you've seen "twice as many" movies as me? That would put you at about 6800 movies--that's a list I'd like to see. My late friend, Rick, who went to the movies every single day from 1969 to about 1995 had not reached 6000 when he died. You'll excuse me once again, but I kinda fuckin' doubt you've seen more than him. However, if you have a list of these 6800 movies--as Rick had a list of all the films he'd seen and I have a list of all of the films I've seen--attach it and send it along to josh@beckerfilms. If you don't have list, you are absolutely kidding yourself.

Josh

Name:Scott Papanu
E-mail: Scott.papanu@worldnet.att.net

Dear Josh:

Is there going to be a DVD or Laser Disc version for sale of Running Time? If so, when?

Dear Scott:

I can't offer a DVD version myself because it's too expensive for me to remaster the video tape transfer and "burn" just a few hundred copies. If I ever make a first-run U.S. video deal, the DVD will be part of it. If I can't, it will be available when I make the sell-through deal in about a year.

Josh

Name:Sheri Lynn Boye
E-mail: BPICKER2@AOL.COM

Dear Josh:

Hi Josh-- I have a quick question to ask you about the early film industry. ESSANY, this is my family name from Budapest, can you tell me more about the film company and were I could look for info on this company on the web etc?? Thanks

Sheri Lynn

(great grandfather-Bela Essany)

Dear Sheri Lynn:

I'm sorry to have to be the one to tell you this, but Essany is really S & A, which stands for Spoor and Anderson. The Anderson is Bronco Billy Anderson, one of the first western stars. The company was founded in 1907 and was where Charlie Chaplin made his best two-reelers in 1916-17.

Josh

Name:Chris
E-mail: bertbarkely@hotmail.com

Dear Mr. Becker:

I'm a big fan of yours. Lunatics is great! I saw it a while back and have been "dieing" to get a copy since. Anyway, for my reasoning for sending this: I began a yahoo club for all of you guys under sam raimi's name(in the description it lists all of you-I've already made a Running Time folder for pictures that I could find). I was wondering if I could beg you to come in and chat with us. I just started this club and there's 18 to this point. I want to try this before we get too many. It would be unorganized (unless I come up with some brilliant idea), but I think it could work.

Tell me what you think.

Thanks

Chris

Dear Chris:

That would OK with me, schedule permitting. However, you'd better brief your eighteen cohorts that I do not bear fools lightly. If the questions become too stupid I will bail out. By the way, "dieing" is spelled "dying" and "unorganized" is really "disorganized."

Josh

Name:Andrew Trepanier
E-mail: JTrepp@aol.com

Dear Josh:

I'm a big fan of your work and am pleased to see all the success you've earned over the years. I'm currently finishing work on the screenplay for my first horror movie "The Man with the Axe". It's also going to be my directing debut. Can you give me any specifics on how funds were allocated for the earlier movies that you worked on like Evil Dead or Evil Dead 2. Again, congrats on making a name for yourself in such a tough business.

Hope to hear from you,
Andrew

Dear Andrew:

I feel like Charles Foster Kane, who said, "Buy a bag of popcorn in this town and they write a song about you." I am certainly not a success by Hollywood standards--none of my movies have generated any profit (I did break even on "Lunatics") and I'm just one of hundreds of DGA directors that direct the TV shows and I'm certainly not in the top ranks of those guys. I'm not network-approved, so I can't work on any of the big TV shows. I'm not being humble here, I'm stating the facts.

Josh

Name: Tony
E-mail: Chakram71201@sprynet.com

Hey Mr. Becker:

I was wondering, when you're hired to direct an episode of Xena approximately how much time do you have between receiving the script and beginning the actual filming of the episode. Also, is there much work you need to do in preparing for the shoot after you get the script before you actually get on set and start shooting.

Thanks.
Tony

Dear Tony:

That, I think, is an interesting question. As soon as I have been hired to direct an episode I begin to receive whatever exists of the script, which is generally an outline at that point. The script goes through many rewrites after this and I generally get something that's near to the shooting script just as I'm leaving for the airport to go to New Zealand. I arrive in NZ two weeks before we shoot. During that two weeks is when I do all of my planning and concurrently the script continues to be re-written. In two instances, "Fins, Femmes & Gems" and "If the Shoe Fits . . .", the scripts were being majorly re-written while I was shooting.

In the case of "Fins," we received a completely new script the morning we began shooting. This puts everyone at a disadvantage (even though it was a good rewrite), particularly the actors who have not had a chance to learn their lines. In the case of "Shoe," the script was never finalized. It had gone through seven drafts and none of them made much sense (with all due respect to Adam Armus & Nora Kay Foster's 1st draft, which made the most sense). On the Sunday before we began shooting, the Executive Producer came to my place and we spent the entire day with the seven drafts laid out in front of us picking the best pages from each draft. Since none of these pages connected to any of the other ones, I was given the order to "Make them connect," which I did to the best of my ability. Now that I think about it, this happened to me one time earlier as well with "For Him the Bell Tolls," which was written in a week after Lucy had fallen off the horse and broke her hip. And now that I think about it a bit more, all of the scripts that were troublesome I added a song into. In "For Him the Bell Tolls" I put in the "Joxer the Mighty" song, in "Fins" I added the "Song of Gabrielle" and in "Shoe" I added "I'm in Heaven" (I wrote all three songs, by the way). I guess I figure that if a script is a bit ragged a song is bound to help.

And having now given you the longest answer yet, I will move on to part two--what does a director do during pre-production? This is when most of my work is done. What a director brings with them to the set is preparedness--I have read that script and dissected it way more than anyone else. I have decided in advance what I'm after in the scene and how I intend to shoot it. As I figure these things out during pre-production I inform everyone around me of my intentions, particularly the 1st assistant director. If my ideas involve props, sets, costumes, make-up or hair, then I must inform those departments as soon as I can so they will be prepared. I make more actual decisions about how the episode will be shot during pre-production than during the shoot. If possible, I like to stick as closely to my plan as I can when I get on the set. This doesn't always work, but I do my best.

Thanks for a good question.

Josh

Name:Nolan Reese
E-mail: SCCComics@aol.com

Dear Josh:

I'm just wondering, do you plan to adapt any more of you scripts to screen? I still haven't seen any of your flicks but based on some of the stff you've written on the sight i can't wait to. Will any of your flick ever be released for sell through?

-N

P.S. I know we're not suposed to ask personal questions, so you don't have to answer but... I read the making of Lunitics and i'm wondering, did you and scott ever reconcile?

Dear Nolan:

"Thou Shalt Not Kill . . . Except" has been sold-through twice. This second, wide-screen, re-release is occuring now. The film should be at Best Buy and Blockbuster for \$12.95. You can already order it online from Blockbuster.

I'm just gearing up to independently shoot another one of my scripts called "If I Had a Hammer." But it's not posted. I'm also attempting to set up financing for another of my scripts, "The Battle of Belleau Wood," a true, World War One story. This isn't posted, either.

Scott and I did reconcile, but we don't really speak anymore.

Josh

Name:Josh Hamerman
E-mail: josh1522@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

From one Josh to another (ha ha - don't laugh too hard at that one), I want you to know that I have observed your direction in the films listed in your filmography, and I admire it. As an aspiring actor/director/screenwriter, I have a question for you: Does the director have a large say in the casting? That's the one aspect that varies from film to film in Hollywood. Based on your personal experience, how much of a say do you have, and how much do your contracted casting directors usually have?

Sincerely,

Josh Hamerman (pronounced Hammerman)

P.S. If you have a large say, I'd be happy to drop by for a casting call or two!

Dear Josh:

On my movies I have complete say so on casting. On Xena have a lot of say so, but not complete by any means. In New Zealand the casting director is Diana Rowan. She scours the country for actors and gets a slew of them to read for the parts. When I arrive in NZ, my first job is to meet with Di and watch the tapes of the six to ten actors she has chosen as the best for each part. I then choose the actor that will play the part, which then has to be OKed by the producers (and generally is). Only once in eight episodes have the producers over-riden me, so my average is pretty good. On my movies the casting director puts out the casting call to the agents and sets up the auditions. I watch all of the auditions and choose the actors. On "Running Time," and most probably on my upcoming film, "If I Had a Hammer," the casting director was and will be Donise Hardy with L.A. Casting Works.

Josh

Name:August

E-mail: joxerfan@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I enjoyed your friend Jeremy Roberts' performance as Aidan on XWP last week, and was pleasantly surprised to discover that he'll be on the X-Files this Sunday! So what's his connection to you, Bruce C., and the Raimi's?

Dear August:

Our first connection to Jeremy was when he was in the episode of Xena that I directed, "A Fistful of Dinars." He was so good that he was quickly cast in a Hercules episode. When I wrote "Running Time" I had Jeremy in mind from the beginning and when he read the script he accepted the part. In this latest episode of Hercules, which Rob Tapert (the Executive Producer) directed in six days, which is fast, he called me and asked what I suggested he do to stay on such a fast schedule. I offered, "Get a real good actor for the guest star and that will take a big load off your mind." Rob cast Jeremy and, as he's since said, never had to think about that part again. That's Jeremy's connection to us.

Josh

[Webmaster's Note: You can visit Jeremy Robert's official page by clicking [HERE](#) --Gerry]

Name:James Hodgson

E-mail: legion@ihug.co.nz

Hiya Josh,

in case you haven't read it, 'Pretty Boy Floyd' by Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana falls into that 'Best Unmade Film from a True Story'. This is a great read! Also recommend 'Savage Art' biography of novelist Jim Thompson (The Grifters etc). You ever seen 'The Killing'? It's a film Jim scripted for Kubrick. It's a classic heist movie. (The section in the book about Thompson's dealings with Kubrick is also ...interesting). Post some more scripts!!(eg.Lunatics-a love story).

Cheers

James

Dear James:

I stopped reading Larry McMurtry after "Texasville" and his stupid Billy the Kid book. I do have tremendous fondness, however, for "Horseman, Pass By," "The Last Picture Show" and "Lonesome Dove."

Just for your information, Stanley Kubrick wrote the script for "The Killing," based on the book "Clean Break" by Lionel White, and Jim Thompson gets an "additional dialogue" credit. Thompson does get a co-writing credit on Kubrick's next film, "Paths of Glory."

I intend to post some more scripts (I've written 28, by the way). My webmaster, Gerry, has the file for one called "The Winds of Fate," (the story of which was co-written by Bruce Campbell and I), but as many times as I've asked him to post it he keeps ignoring me (hint, hint). What can I do? I began scanning "Lunatics" and the type is so faded that the scanner couldn't pick it up. I must go get a darker copy, then scan it in.

Thanks for the interest, mate. Good-on-ya,

Josh

Name:Irishman

E-mail: Irishman91@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Hey, what did you think of the movie, "Henry and June"? I've read all of Miller's and Nin's books and just wanted to know what you thought about the film.

Later,
Irishman

Dear Irishman:

I have not seen "Henry & June," nor have I ever finished a book by Henry Miller, nor have I read any of Anais Nin. I have seen any number of Phil Kaufman's films, however, and I've never been particularly impressed with any of them.

Josh

Name:Danny Cork

E-mail: paulcork@swbell.net

Dear Josh:

For you, how do you KNOW when one of your films is successful? (I'm not talking money). In other words do you trust your own opinion whilst watching something you've made, or do you take into account what others feel. Because film awards NEVER get it right, how do you judge how good your

film is?

Dear Danny:

To me, my films are a success if I get them made. What people think after that isn't my problem. Of course, I do appreciate it if people like them and it does distress me if they don't like them, but once it's done, it's done--I have mentally moved on to the next film. If I know that I gave each film my best effort, that's all I can do.

Josh

Name:August

E-mail: joxerfan@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

More than a few people have commented on the fact that even though most of the Xena episodes you direct are the wacky comedy ones, you still show a love and respect for both the characters and the performers that is sometimes missing, especially in the 4th season episodes. Any comment on character-driven comedy, or on how the abilities of the individual performers has influenced (if at all) your directing?

By the way - your caustic asides and put-downs to many of the questions you are sent is funny as hell! I'm sure it annoys a lot of people, but I say go with it dude!

Dear August:

In my humble opinion, a director's main concern ought to be the characters and their motivations. Any director that spends more time dealing with the camera than the actors is a bad director. (As an aside, I plan every single camera angle, but that's all done before I arrive on the set). I do have a great respect for these actors, all of whom are very talented. It gives me great joy to work with talented actors and I suspect that they know that. And I've done my very best to understand what the script is attempting to accomplish and do my best to keep it going in that direction.

As for my snotty comments, I can't help it, that's just me.

Josh

Name:Golightly

E-mail: golightly7@geocities.com

Dear Josh:

Are you still trying to find distribution for your film, "Running Time"?

Dear Holly:

Yes.

Josh

Name:Unco22

E-mail:

Dear Josh:

If someone had money, say \$200,000 to invest in your new Bruce Campbell western project, how would they get in touch with your production company? And would they be included on the credits of the film as a producer?

Thx so much,
Unco

Dear Unco:

For \$200,000 you could have the Executive Producer credit, and a free poster. And you have gotten in touch with me. This is a direct route to me.

Josh

Name:Irishman

E-mail: Irishman91@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I am a film student and wanted to know if Renaissance allows interships in the production department? I also want to know what you do in your spare time? Lastly, is it true that Liz F. got a job by sending Sam Raimi a college thesis about "Evil Dead"?

Thank a lot,
Irishman

Dear Irishman:

The production arm of Renaissance is in New Zealand and I believe they do have some interns down there, but they're all locals. As For Liz F., I can't imagine Liz writing her college thesis on "Evil Dead," which doesn't mean she didn't, but I doubt it. I also don't think Sam had anything to do with hiring her, but once again I don't know for sure. In regard to my spare time, I read and write and watch movies.

Josh

Name:Nicholas Hubbell
E-mail: nhmusic@earthlink.net

Dear Josh:

I am a film composer with 15 years experience. Most of my work is in the commercial area - spots, documentaries, children's programs and corporate videos. I am very interested in more unusual and frankly creative kinds of productions. My personal work is quite experimental. Your work is great!

Please contact me if you would like to review a CD demo of my work.

Dear Nicholas:

I have only worked with one composer in my adult life, Joe LoDuca (who not only did my movies, but the "Evil Dead" films and "Hercules" and "Xena" as well). I will continue working with Joe until A). I die, B). He dies, or C). I can afford Jerry Goldsmith.

Josh

Name:Heath Opper
E-mail: heo96001@uconnvm.uconn.edu

Dear Josh:

Hi. I just saw the Xena episode 'If The Shoe Fits...' and I think you did a great job directing it. I am a big fan of Xena, Hercules, and Young Hercules and I have noticed that some directors have directed episodes on the three different shows. Is your contract only to direct Xena episodes or can you also direct Hercules and Young Hercules episodes too. Also would you happen to know where I could buy a video copy of the Hercules movie 'Maze of the Minotaur' that will play in American VCRs.

Thanks,

Heath

Dear Heath:

I have no contract, I am hired episode by episode. There were only three directors on "Young Hercules," all New Zealanders and all working non-director's guild. I can't do that. After the one TV movie, "Minotaur," I've never been on "Hercules" again. Perhaps Kevin Sorbo didn't like working with me, I don't know. And in regard to "Maze of the Minotaur," it was never released in the U.S. Sorry.

Josh

Name:Eric
E-mail: mcgonz0@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

I really want to say THANK YOU for supplying your "Need for Structure" articles. After reading them, I immediately started noticing the 3 step structure in movies and it has helped me greatly in writing my own stories. One quick question though, when will "Thou Shalt Not Kill...Except" come to vhs? I thought Anchor Bay released it already but I have yet to see it in stores. see ya

Dear Eric:

"Thou" is a-coming within the next few weeks. It's already available online from Blockbuster (or, at least, can be ordered). It ought to be everywhere by the end of February.

Josh

Name:shawn Carter
E-mail: www.shacarter@wral-tv.com

Dear Josh:

I'm a senior television/film major and I would like to know what path should I take to be successful in the film industry. I must add I would like to direct videos intially.

Dear Shawn:

Since I'm not particularly successful in the film industry, I'm not the one to ask. Since you need not have any talent at all to direct music videos, I think it's a difficult field to get into because anyone can do it. That market is drying up pretty badly, too. However, if that's the path you care to pursue, God bless you.

Josh

Name:James Culver
E-mail: culverjames@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Being a huge Bruce Campbell fan and movie buff, I was extremely interested in seeing this movie when I heard about it. I just recently ordered it from this website, and after seeing it, all I could say is, "wow." Not only did it boast one of Bruce Campbell's best erformances to date, it was a film of incredible technical acheivement. Kudos to everyone involved in making it.

Dear James:

Thanks a lot. Bruce and I and the other members of the cast and crew honestly gave it our best shot. We all got out there and tried our best to make as good a movie as we could. It was very gratifying for both Bruce and I (we discussed this yesterday) to make a film with no other concern than to do good

work. If you enjoyed the film, then we succeeded.

Thanks,
Josh

Name:Curtis Henschel
E-mail: Kurdt_Henschel@hotmail.com

Dear Josh Becker:

Ok, thanks for the answers but I just have one more question:
Why? Why did your journal say Rich and Theresa instead of Hal and Shelly?

Oh, wait, actually, two questions:
What was the experience of Evil Dead like, personally?

Well thanks for the time and answers.
Your fan,
Curtis

Dear Curtis:

I just answered this question. Rich and Theresa are there names, that's why I called them that. They both used fake names due to being in the Screen Actor's Guild and it was not a SAG shoot. And Theresa's stage name wasn't Shelly, it was Sarah York. And if you read my "Evil Dead Journal" then I think you got as good an idea as possible as to how I felt during the shoot.

Josh

Name:Hasan Ali Ýmal
E-mail: h_imal@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I'm from Turkey.I have a scenario. I want to film about it.Please help me...Thank you for your nterest.

Dear Hasan:

It certainly is interesting getting an e-mail from Turkey. Since my big concern is getting my own movies made, you will have to get your own movies made. I'd be more than happy, however, to watch it when it's done. My one piece of advice would be--a country is not a worthy subject for a film, you need a character.

Josh

Name:Anthony Brooks
E-mail: Chakram71201@sprynet.com

Hey JB.

A few quick questions on your recent Xena episode "If The Shoe Fits." I thought it was pretty hilarious. I have a few questions on the opening scenes in the show that has Gabby bathing. I recieved email a while back from her fan club that Renee was quite modest and if you ever saw any nude scenes of Gabrielle that it was either a body double or she was wearing some strategically placed clothing and used camera angles to make it appear you were seeing more than you were.

Given this I take it Renee wasn't totally topless. But my first question has to be was she totally topless or not. But if not, as a director what tricks are there you can use with the camera to make it appear as if you are seeing more than you actually are.

Take care.
Anthony

Dear Anthony:

Basically, if it's a long shot and you can't see her face, it's not her. If you can see her face, then she is wearing a flesh-colored top that is being hidden below frame or behind a branch or something. Neither Lucy nor Renee ever does any actual nudity.

Josh

Name:David Hughes
E-mail: hughesium@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

I meant, quite simply, why would Spielberg have a post-production party for a film (schindler's list) which deals with similarly serious content to Saving Private Ryan, and not for SPR? If he really respected the message, then why would he rerelease the movie so soon? The idea was conveyed in the first showing.

Dear David:

I'm sorry, but what does respecting the message of "Saving Private Ryan" got to do with re-releasing the film? If he truly respects the message of his film, whatever it may be, then obviously he would want as many people as possible to get that message, right? Never forget that the first and foremost reason any film is ever made in Hollywood is to make money, no matter what it's about. And as for having a wrap party or not, what's that got to do with anything? After shooting a film for four or five months I can easily understand either having or not having a wrap party depending on how tired you are. I absolutely understand being cynical about the film business, but I find your cynicism misplaced.

Josh

Name:Kristin
E-mail: DARKTOWER14@yahoo.com

Mr. Becker,

My friends and I are planning on making a movie. can you give us Any tips or advice?

Sincerly,
Kristin

Dear Kristin:

A). Read my essay entitled "The Need for Structure" and commit it to memory, and B). Tell a story that means something to you, not one you think other people will like.

Josh

Name:Curtis Henschel
E-mail: Kurdt_Henschel@hotmail.com

Hey Josh:

My question is about your journal you compiled during the making of The Book Of The Dead. In the journal you talk about Theresa and Rich. These names do not appear any where in Evil Dead credits. From logical thinking I have put together that Rich is Hal Denrich, is this true?

And from this I suppose Theresa is Sarah York? I also would like to know if you have pictures of the crew of ED1, because even though I don't sound it, I am a HUGE fan of ED. My favorite things to find are things like your journal. I am really excited about reading it and learning about life during the making. So if you can answer this, or if you can send me any pictures of behind the scenes, I'd love it. MY comment is the page rocks and so do your films.

Thanks for making the page for people like me :)

Possibly the biggest fan of Josh Becker, Evil Dead and Sam and Bruce,
Curtis Henschel

Dear Curtis:

Yes, Rich DeManicor is Hal Delrich and Theresa Tilly is Sarah York. No, I don't have any photos of the crew.

Josh

Name:David Hughes

E-mail: hughesium@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

I was watching 'A Simple Plan' and I saw in the previews that Spielberg is rereleasing 'Saving Private Ryan'. For a movie with no post production party due to the "serious content" of the message, he sure is squeezing all the cash he can out of it. By the way, what is more serious about this joke of a movie than 'Schindler's List'? Off topic: What did you think of 'A Simple Plan'? Thanks for responding to my last question so promptly. I disagree about the value of remaking films however. Some good ideas have been butchered by production and directing. Isn't that what running time was? A remake and expansion on an idea developed by someone else? PS, Change the format of your comments box please. It fucking sucks.

Dear David:

I don't understand what you mean when you ask, "What is more serious about this joke of a movie ['Saving Private Ryan'] than 'Schindler's List'?"

Considering that Mr. Sam Raimi is my employer, I will decline comment on "A Simple Plan."

And no, I don't consider "Running Time" a remake of "Rope." The two stories have nothing in common; I simply followed up on a technical aspect, which is quite a different thing. The old adage goes, "If you're not directly inspired by something, then you're just stealing." I took one aspect of "Rope" and ran in an entirely different direction. Also, I used the technique differently than Hitchcock did. I'm sure you haven't seen the latter example, but "Citizen Kane" lifted the flashback structure of "The Power and the Glory" (not to mention the story being about an insensitive rich guy), does that make it a remake? No. Orson Welles and Herman Mankiewicz took the idea and ran in a different direction with it. That's called inspiration.

Josh

[2008 Webmaster's Note: It took 10 years for your change format request to finally go through, but here at Beckerfilms, we pride ourselves on fast service. -Kevin]

Name: James Hodgson

E-mail: legion@ihug.co.nz

Dear Josh:

Josh, my favourite thus far of your posted scripts would be "TEDDY ROOSEVELT IN THE BAD LANDS". Have you read 'The Alienist' and it's sequel by Caleb Carr? I'm looking forward to seeing 'Running Time'.

Best

James Hodgson

<http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~legion>

Dear James:

I have not read "The Alienist," but I am aware of it. It's about when TR was police commissioner of NYC, correct? I must say, however, that I like true stories with actual characters better than made-up stories. I made up some of the details in "TR in the BL," but it's a true story. TR's life was so interesting one need not make up stories to put him in.

Josh

Name:David Hughes
E-mail: hughesium@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

I would have thought that 'johnny got his gun' would have been on your list of favorite movies. In fact, I think you would be just the person to remake it. Just promise you won't go gusvansant style.

Dear David:

If all goes reasonably well in my life, hopefully I'll never remake anything. I hate remakes like a bad toothache. Remakes are a declaration stating, "I have no imagination." I do recall sitting in the theater in 1971 seeing "Johnny Got His Gun" and thinking, "Gosh, Dalton Trumbo has no idea how to direct a movie." He was a pretty good writer, though. If you ever get a chance check out "Five Came Back," which Dalton Trumbo co-wrote with Nathanael West ("Day of the Locust") in 1939.

Josh

Name:Maud Beau
E-mail: DERKENN@wanadoo.fr

Hello Mister Becker

I blush with shame. Sir, the last time I have write Baker insteated of Becker. I don't know where to put myself. I beg your pardon, Ô master of the Minautor. Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry (Say it when I could stop) sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry.

- What do you think of Akira Kurosawa, Satyajit Ray, Sergio Leone?
- How many french film have you never seen?
- What do you think of the series Babylon 5 ?
- Do you speak french or spanish a little?

Thanks for all :-)
Maud

Dear Maud:

Don't worry, I didn't take it personally. Let's take your questions from the bottom up. No, I don't speak any French nor Spanish, or any other language beside English. No, I do not watch "Babylon 5." I have seen quite a few French films and, for the most part, am not a fan. I find most French films to be far too

ephemeral and wispy for their own good (like every Truffaut film). I do like "The Wages of Fear" and "Forbidden Games," though. As for Akira Kurosawa, I am fond of a number of his films: Dersu Uzala, Seven Samurai, Sanjuro, Yojimbo, Ikiru, High and Low. Nevertheless, Mr. Kurosawa is not one of my favorites--his pace is generally too slow for me, he seems to encourage his actors to yell a lot, and he rarely if ever does anything interesting with the camera. I feel very much the same way about Satyajit Ray, his pace is just too damn slow. As for Sergio Leone, I loved "A Fistful of Dollars" as a kid, but none of his films have held up for me; I find them all to be a bore now. I can no longer sit through "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" or "Once Upon a Time in the West," both of which seem insanely long now. I sort of didn't mind when everybody was a kid in "Once Upon a Time in America," but when they became adults the whole thing went into the crapper.

Josh

Name: Jim Eagan
E-mail: Starion106@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Hey Josh, I've been reading your various columns on the site and had an idea: How about reviewing some of your own films? I know that you are (or were) a film critic in some capacity, so.. I think that would make an interesting article or two. Or is this a taboo in the film world? Or is there another reason why you wouldn't do it (such as too close to the film to get a decent perspective of it). Think you could just sit back and write a review of Running Time, or Thou Shalt Not Kill, or maybe even a Xena episode you directed. I mean, it doesn't exactly seem like you're rushing out to the theaters to see Hollywood's latest ;-). Anyway, just a thought. Keep up the good work.

Jim

Dear Jim:

You'll excuse me, but that sounds like a jerk-off project. If I say my stuff is good, I'll sound conceited, if I say it's bad, I'll sound fake-humble. It's not for me to review my own work. Just know that in all cases I did my best.

Josh

Name: Eva Bauche-Eppers
E-mail: Eva.Bauche-Eppers@t-online.de

Dear Josh:

Hello Mr. Becker, I'm member of a fantasy club in Germany (the biggest and most venerable:) Though the main emphasis is on literature of the fantasy genre there is also an interest in science fiction and horror, and humble Me, being a long-time Bruce Campbell and Evil Dead fan, was chosen to approach you and ask your permission to translate your Evil Dead Journal into German and publish it in our fanzine "Fantasia". It would be a great pleasure and be assured that your writings would be treated with due care and respect...

Best,

Eva Bauche-Eppers
freelance literary translator

Dear Eva:

You have my permission, translate to your heart's content.

Josh

Name: John Forde
E-mail: jforde@wppost.depaul.edu

Dear Josh:

Thank you for your painfully honest insights and answers. I am a musician and I can identify w/ your struggle. It is my job to write the songs, get the equipment (guitars, amps, monitors, mics, PA, etc.), organize other musicians, get gigs, fund studio projects, etc. I have a good idea what you go through. I have recently discovered a wealth of Blues music from the 20's & 30's (a 3 CD X-mas gift titled Southern Country Blues) and have begun to furiously go backwards and 'educate' myself. You mention a possible project about folk music. What would it entail? Also, please list some essential Folk albums. I have printed out the "Running Time" order form and have given it to 4 local 'indie' type video stores. I am excited to see it, I wish I could order it myself, but like I said, I'm a musician and have not much \$.

Keep up the good work!

Dear John:

I am just completing the 4th draft of the script for the folk project. Although I'm certainly no expert in the field, a few suggestions would be: The Weavers at Carnegie Hall (1955), The Weavers "Wasn't That a Time," Bob Dylan's 1st album which is simply entitled "Bob Dylan," Dylan's 2nd album, "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan," Pete Seeger's "If I Had a Hammer: Songs of Hope & Struggle," Peter, Paul & Mary's first album, entitled "Peter, Paul & Mary." There's a few.

Josh

Name: Maud Beau
E-mail: DERKENN@wanadoo.fr

Dear Josh:

Hello Mr Baker, Muchas gracias for your answer. I'm very happy that you love Paris. I can't buy the video of "RUNNING TIME" because I'm living in France but I hope that one day it will be broadcast on Canal + (I write to them every month about Running Time, they certainly crack by exasperation in 10 or 15 years. If I will succeed, I could have commission, the video of "a fistful of dinars" for example...). More seriously there's any addresses where I could write to Jeremy Roberts?

Thanks one more time. I hope to you that you could make all the films that you want this year.

BONNE ET HEUREUSE ANNEE 1999 !

Dear Maud:

Keep up the attack on Canal+. I am working on a distribution deal that would release the film in Europe, but it's based on a getting both an American company and a European company to work in tandem, which ain't easy. If I'm not mistaken, and I certainly could be, Jeremy Roberts has his own website, www.jeremyroberts.com, try him there.

Adios, Amiga,
Josh

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

Dear Josh:

I'm interested in writing an article for Whoosh! (the online Xena journal) about what you once called the "incestuous" relationship between yourself, Bruce Campbell, the Raimis, etc. - sort of a Detroit mafia thing, I guess! Any suggestions on resources, previous interviews, filmographies, etc.?

Dear August:

Fangoria Magazine has been running articles on Sam and Bruce, and very occasionally me, for many years, so check their back issues. You may also want to read my "'Evil Dead' Journal," which is available here on this site. If you have any specific questions, feel free to ask through this forum. Good luck.

Josh

Name: Andrew Kasch
E-mail: akasch@bellsouth.net

Dear Josh:

I am absolutely dying to see THOU SHALT NOT KILL... EXCEPT. But its nowhere to be found. Is there anywhere that its available?

Dear Andrew:

"Thou . . ." should be in the stores by the end of the month. Check your local Best Buy store. I think it will be \$19.95. It's a brand-new, widescreen transfer with some additional material at the end (the theatrical trailer, a deleted scene and the old title sequence).

Josh

Name:Chris Hicks
E-mail: chris.hicks@dial.pipex.com

Hey there Josh,

I've been forwarded to you from a friend of mine (and yours) - Gerry Kissell.

So the reason for this is I'm just about to do my finals and I'm looking at courses, which is it going to be I think, Computer Graphics or Movies... well after a long discussion with Gerry, I've decided on movies.

That's where this e-mail comes in, he's said "The best person to talk to is Josh", so I'm gonna' ask you what I asked him... because England has a shit film industry, what's the sort of college courses I should be looking at... Film Studies/Media Studies etc etc.

I'm 18 in May, so basically I'd appreciate it if there's any advice for the next direction I have to take in going further into movies... just to let you know more knowledge, I'm not looking on screen or anything, purely crew work - anything from producing right down to a gaffer!

Chris

Dear Chris:

I do not mean to be glib, but choosing movies as a profession is probably choosing misery as a lifetime companion. If you are not burning with passion to be a filmmaker, you should probably ought to skip it and find something more rational and dependable. The tip-off to me that you are not really passionate about being a filmmaker is the attitude of "I'll do anything." Although for many years I would certainly do anything on a film crew (I generally ended up as a production assistant, the lowest job), I always wanted to be a director/writer and was always pursuing those goals with all my might. If you walk into a producer's office and say, "I'll do anything," that probably means you won't get anything. If you walk in and say, "I'm dying to be a cameraman and I spend every single spare second studying cameras, light meters and the American Cinematographer's Manual (a good book to study), then you might get a job on the camera crew. So, my suggestion to you is specialize. Your chances will increase.

Josh

Name:Mary McDonough
E-mail: mary@bfd.com

Dear Josh:

This is the only e-mail address I have for you, so I'll ask here.

There is an upcoming Xena/Hercules Convention in Santa Monica on January 23&24th, sponsored by Creation Entertainment. Has Creation ever asked you to participate? You have many fans (myself included) that would love to meet you. A few of us will be converging on your town during the week prior to the convention. We would love to take you to lunch or dinner and get to know the man behind the scenes, if you are available. Game?

Yours,

Mary =)

Dear Mary:

It is nice to know I have a few fans, but no, Creation has never asked me to attend one of these conventions. However, as I get older and subsequently more psychotic, I like being part of a crowd less and less. It would also distress me to be among other Herc/Xena folk that are being paid to be there when I'm not. But please, you have a good time.

Josh

Name:Paul Gray

E-mail: paulgray28@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Hi there, I am very interested in working in the film industry, mainly in SFX. I have been doing a few stage shows and some other theatre work. Do you have any hints for things that would impress a crew, that I should try to add to my resume? Also I have been trying to contact Flat Earth for ages, do you have an address for them?

Cheers

Paul

Dear Paul:

Flat Earth is located on the Universal lot in Universal City (area code 818) and the fellow that runs the company is Kevin O'Neal (a very nice guy).

Of course, there are different kinds of FX: digital and mechanical (optical FX are now part of digital). If you're into mechanical FX you could build something and show it to other FX guys. If you want to go into digital FX (as I suppose you do if you want to talk to Flat Earth), then you'd best figure out how to do them and become conversant in the lingo.

Josh

Name:Veronica Munoz

E-mail: VJuice9@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Hi. I would like to be an independent film maker. I was wondering how do you like being a director and if you could give me and my partner advice on how-to become a good director? (Anything will help.)
Thanks >>

Dear Veronica:

I love being a director, when I'm working. However, as my downstairs neighbor, Mike, who is a freelance cameraman, said today, "The difficult part about being freelance is that hard to tell whether you're between jobs or unemployed." On "Xena," for instance, you get hired one episode at a time and you never know if they'll ever hire you again. And as for independent movies, just because you made one doesn't mean you'll ever make another.

To be a good film director, in my humble opinion, you need to know a variety of different things. First and foremost is: what are the elements of a good story? Second is: how to work with actors? Third is: what would make the scene visually interesting? Even if you never pick up on the third point, but still have the first two, you can make a good movie. If, like most modern directors, you've ignored the first two points and gone directly to the third, you'll probably never make a good movie.

Josh

Name:BOB

E-mail: Kisrs0ze@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Where could one get a copy of these "Raimi" Shorts????? >>

Dear Bob:

Since we ourselves do not sell these films, there is no "official" place to buy them. I've gone back and forth on this with both Bruce and Sam, and since no one is willing to deal with the music clearance issue, there you have it. If you search around on the web, I'll bet you can find them.

Josh

Name:andy

E-mail: weezycocheezy@webtv.com

Dear Josh:

Do you feel fortunate that you grew up with friends who shared the same dream as you do? Also, if you had directed the Evil Dead films, what would you have done differently?

Dear Andy:

In regard to your first question, yes, it was fortunate, it made putting a crew together much easier. Also, having someone like Bruce Campbell -- who is very responsible and detail oriented -- from early on helped greatly.

As to your second question, which I find completely ridiculous, I would have undoubtedly made the first one in such a way that there never would have been a desire for two sequels (as there has been no

desire for sequels to any of my movies).

Josh

Name:

E-mail:

Hey Josh:

Oh I understand, I just wanted to get an idea of what steps need to be taken. We'll be making a few "on-video" movies, such as the one we're working on now. I'm glad you replied :) When did you start? like at what age? I'm 19 right now, and have allot of years ahead of me. We did the usual "teenaged" movies in the past years, and my partners and myself were all award winners in our high-school video and computer tech courses. Not a big victory, but gave us the inspiration to go on. How did you get to where you are now?

Matt

Dear Matt:

You should ask your questions through the website that way it's easier for me to post them, and since they happen to be good questions I intend to post them. My movie obsession began at 9-years old and I began making movies at 11-years old. I didn't put a rational production together, however, until I was 20, and that was because I finally began working seriously with Bruce Campbell.

As to how did I get to where I am now? Since I've never been a particularly lucky person and Sam Raimi has always been a very lucky person, I rode to where I am on his coat-tails.

Josh

Name:

E-mail:

Hi Josh..

I got your address from Bruce Campbell. Anyhow, I'm an aspiring independent film maker, graphic artist, and multi-media developer. I thought you'd be the best person to talk to about independent film making because you've done it and did a good job of it as well :) My big question for you is HOW do you collect money for your feature...? not everyone has \$100,000 or even \$1000 lying around to be put into a movie. What steps need to be taken to finance a film, and what methods have you used?

Merry Christmas

Matthew Dawydchak
BiLE-X Entertainment

Dear Matthew:

You say this like Bruce or Sam or I (samurai?) had \$100,000 lying around to make a movie with. Since we all started making movies so early and even the short Super-8 films we were making cost more money than we had, we had to begin the money-raising process. I was the first one to attempt the limited partnership route, in 1977, by raising \$200 each from five of my relatives to make three Super-8 movies. Scott Spiegel and I were in the money-raising mode for nearly five years, from 1980 to the end of 1984, until we made "Thou Shalt Not Kill . . . Except" in 1985. For "Lunatics" the money-raising took the better part of a year (1988-89). I then worked on "Hercules" and "Xena" for three years, saved all my money, raised some more, and made "Running Time."

I'm sorry to inform you, but there's no easy way to do this.

Josh

Name:Mike Carroll
E-mail: kirs0ze@aol.com

Dear Josh:

I was reading some of the old questions and came across the fact that you don't like remakes of any sort. I was wondering what you thought about Evil Dead 2 because it's marketed in Columbia House as a Remake/Sequel??

Dear Mike:

I like "Evil Dead" better than "Evil Dead 2," I think it's scarier.

Josh

Name:Gonzo
E-mail: mcgonz0@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

Josh--Is there any chance of Running Time reaching dvd or laserdisc sometime in the future when the film becomes more popular? (Which I truly beleive it will)

Dear Gonzo:

Thanks for the vote of confidence. Eventually, "RT" will end up on DVD (laserdiscs, I daresay, are a dead issue). It may not occur, however, until the sell-through and it becomes a second-run title.

Josh

Name:Tony Brooks
E-mail: Chakram71201@sprynet.com

Hey Josh:

I've been hearing some crazy things on the net about Renee O'Connor getting her hair chopped off. I know you recently worked with her in "If the Shoe Fits." I was curious, was her hair still long while filming that and if it was did she say anything about getting it cut off. I'm just a little paranoid. She's gorgeous and I've had a thing for her for a long time now and she has beautiful hair, and I hate to think of her getting it chopped off.

Thanks.
Tony

Dear Tony:

Let me put it this way, Renee's hair was the same as it ever was on "If the Shoe Fits . . ."

Josh

Name:Cathy Merrill
E-mail: ash1958@juno.com

Dear Josh:

Hi Josh, Thanks again for the interview it's up on my site now. My question is how come you and the rest of your ol' shempin' buddies don't release those shorts. I saw four of them at my friends house and they were quite funny. You and Scott wrote some really good material. " Hold the turtle...and make it pea." and lines like that take quite a bit of imagination and talent. It is clear that you all were destined for greatness. I read that Sam was ashamed of them, I don't know why, he was a hoot. If they were released through you it would definately hurt the bootleggers. Which is why I mentioned it. bootleggers are thieves that are stealing from you guys. I also noticed that they are called the Sam Raimi shorts, which is in my opinion stupid, because you directed most of them. The ones I saw were Cleveland Smith Bounty Hunter, Torro, Torro, Torro, The Blind Waiter (by this time I was ROTF) and Attack of the Helping Hand. You guys sure know how to entertain!!!! oh, if your wondering !! didn't purchase them.

Dear Cathy:

The issue in selling the shorts has always been the music rights. In the case of "Cleveland Smith" and "Torro . . .", we purchased that music, but all the other films--and there are many--have stolen music on them and no one feels like paying for the clearance.

Josh

Name:Katsumi Ishikuma
E-mail: kuma@pscweb.com

Dear Josh:

Hello, Dropped in your site 'cause I'm big fan of Mr. Campbell. I'm a journalist, a book editor, and also

an independent film producer. Interested in your movie. Sounds it's a very challenging movie. Though, looks it's impossible to order the video from Japan. Do you have any distributor in Japan?

Best regards,

Dear Katsumi:

No, I do not have a Japanese distributor. Why, do you know one?

Josh

Name:Yannick Savard
E-mail: ysavard@oricom.ca

Dear Josh:

Hi, Josh ! First of all, let me congratulate you for Runnig Time. This movie is one of the main reason I want to make cinema. But I'm still not fixed with my studying orientation. I already study in cinema at college, and I'm thinking about University, but is it very necessary, you think, to be in the buiseness ? What did you do for your studies ?

Thanks and, good luck in your carreer !

Yannick Savard

Dear Yannick:

I went to six colleges and universities and never graduated. Neither Bruce Campbell nor Sam Raimi graduated from college, either. I don't think there's anything wrong with getting a college degree, but it won't help very much in making a living as a filmmaker. If you want to be a film executive, though, getting a law degree seems to help.

Josh

Name:Audrey Schmidt
E-mail: aschmidt@halcyon.com

Dear Josh:

This isn't really a question, just a comment. Got my copy of Running Time in the mail (and BTW, much quicker than I expected), and wanted to tell you that I enjoyed the movie very much.

Audrey

Dear Audrey:

We aim to please.

Josh

Name:Matt Ingersoll
E-mail: matt@emperor.net

Dear Josh:

Just got my copy of Running Time in the mail yesterday, and I have already watched it 3 times!

The trailer for "Thou Shall Not Kill... Except" has me really intruiged... I looked at all the major film sites and the only film by you listed is"Lunatics... a love story"... any way I can get my hands on a copy of "ThouShall Not Kill"?

Thanks!! Keep up the good work!

-Matt

Dear Matt:

"Thou Shalt Not Kill . . . Except" will be available all over the place (Best Buy for sure) at some point in January through Anchor Bay Video, the same folks that just re-released the "Evil Dead" films. The new video cover is posted at the beginning of "The Making of 'Thou Shalt Not Kill . . . Except'" essay.

Josh

Name:Shirley LeVasseur
E-mail: data@powerlink.net

Dear Josh:

What are some of your favorite books?

--Shirley

Dear Shirley:

I'm reading "The Best American Essays 1998" right now and enjoying it. I read this collection and "The Best American Short Stories" collection every year. Lately, I've been reading mainly history and I particularly like the books of Robert Massie ("Nicholas & Alexandra," "Peter the Great," "Dreadnought") and David McCullough ("Truman," "Mornings on Horseback," "Brave Companions"). I'm a big fan of Willa Cather and Harlan Ellison, too. I went through a thing a few years ago and read all of the book of Alice Hoffman, which are many, and of these really liked "Seventh Heaven." As a kid I loved Isaac Asimov, Kurt Vonnegut, CarsonMcCullers, and, oddly, Norman Mailer. I also read a LOT of movie books, particularly anything written by a filmmaker. I recently re-read "Hitchcock/Truffaut" and it was even better the second time. Peter Bogdanovich's "Who the Devil Made It" was great, too. I also

collect the Pulitzer Prize-winning novels and have them all in hardcover 1st editions going back to the very beginning in 1918.

Josh

Name:David R.

E-mail: davelrla@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

First of all, I was wondering if I could get Josh's autograph? My other question is this: Is Josh associated with Renaissance pictures and, if so, is the new movie that Josh is working on with Bruce Campbell being produced by this company?

Dear David:

Write down your autograph request and return address and send it to Panoramic Pictures, 2801 Ocean Park Blvd., Suite #155, Santa Monica, 90405.

Yes, I am associated with Renaissance Pictures, they are my employers on Xena. They also produced my second film, "Lunatics: A Love Story." Sadly, however, Renaissance has gotten out of the movie business and only does TV now. Sam Raimi's last two films were both for other companies.

Josh

Name:Emily Merkle

E-mail: muncie_girl@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

Being a resident of Knoxville, Tennessee and a rabid fan of the Evil Dead films, I've always been quite pleased to know that the first was at least partially shot in this area. What I want to know is, why was it? I've been to Michigan, and I know that there's no lack of woody properties with cabins. What was the advantage of driving so far south to shoot, and how did you all come to find out about the property?

Dear Emily:

Since we began shooting in November (1979), Sam, Bruce and Rob Tapert, the producers, decided to shoot in Tennessee believing (for some insane reason) that it wouldn't be as cold there. As it turned out, it was very cold in Tennessee. The cabin was located by the Tennessee Film Commission.

Josh

Name:Mark Errante

E-mail: errante@msn.com

Dear Josh:

I am a senior in high school preparing to go to college. I am greatly interested in a career in film but have heard bad things about it as far as getting a good job. I was wondering if you could give me any input as far as the challenges of getting any work at all in the business. Any help would be greatly appreciated.
Thankyou...

Dear Mark:

That all depends on what you want to do in the film business. There are many people vying for all the positions, but there are generally jobs to be gotten in post-production or in the art or costume departments, which are labor-intensive. As to becoming a director or a writer, that's another question entirely. Unless you need to be a director or a writer and it's more important to you than anything on Earth, skip it. It's nothing but misery, penury and heartache. It certainly has its upside, but it takes 20 years generally before you can get a foothold. I did not make a living in the motion picture (or TV, as the case may be) industry until I was 35 years old.

Josh

Name:Jens

E-mail: jens.ostrom@kurir.net

Dear Josh:

Hello!

Finally I've found a more comprehensive site on Running Time than the Internet Movie Database site. That's a relief. I watched Running Time on a film festival here in Sweden in January and I was absolutely stunned by it. I must watch it again, but noone I've asked have any idea of when or even whether it will be released on video in Sweden. Do you know this, or can you guide me to someone else who might know?

greetings

Jens Öström, Piteå, Sweden

Dear Jens:

I am very glad you like the film. At the moment I'm only selling the tape in the U.S. and Canada, due to shipping and customs issues, but I may change that soon. Check back occasionally and when I've made the decision we'll post it.

Josh

Name:dusty

E-mail: L5g@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I was wondering what techniques you use to help some actors open up for the camera? ...and one more question... How do you do your shot set ups before you do a scene?

thank you

Dear Dusty:

I simply discuss the scene with the actors and tell them what it is I'm hoping to get out of the scene. I also do a lot of joking around with the actors to keep the tone on the set light. This is particularly important for day players--the actors with a dialog that come in for a day or two--who are frequently very frightened. It's important to get these actors at ease and let them know that if they blow a line they won't be ridiculed or fired.

As for my shot selections: I used to storyboard absolutely everything I directed. This finally became impossible on Xena due to time constraints and script changes. Now I prepare my version of a "lined script," which is very much like what the script supervisor does. I draw vertical lines through the scene, each line indicating a camera set-up (script supervisors use a ruler, but I don't bother). This way it is very easy to look at the script and see how much coverage I intend to get for each scene. I plan every camera set-up in advance which I find makes production move much more smoothly. Trying to figure out what you want on the set is a big time-waster; a good director always knows what they want.

Josh

Name:Tara

E-mail: tas@ozramp.net.au

Dear Josh:

You probably won't answer these questions but, 1. What is it like to work with Renee O'connor? and...2. In the episode 'If the Shoe fits' will Ted Raimi be dancing with Renee? Thanx for answering my questions.

Dear Tara:

Why wouldn't I answer your questions? 1. Renee O'Connor is a complete and total joy to work with and I am secretly in love with her. 2. Yes, Ted does dance with Renee in "If the Shoe Fits . . ." They do a waltz together. They also sing a song together.

Josh

Name:Kain Vuong

E-mail: kxv125@psu.edu

Dear Josh:

Hello, I'm the webmaster of Ash's Evil Dead Page. I am starting a crew page on my site and would like to ask permission to use your picture of the Evil Dead II crew picture on my crew page. Also later on would like to start an archive of pictures of people involved in the making of the Evil Dead trilogy. So I was wondering if I could you your other pictures too. Proper credit will be given of course.

-Kain

Dear (Citizen) Kain:

Please use whatever you'd like, just run my "Running Time" banner, OK?

Josh

Name:James Hodgson
E-mail: legion@ihug.co.nz

Dear Josh:

Unfortunately I missed you on set when you're over here which is a shame as you sound like one of the few people with any sort of movie history knowledge. Out of curiosity, what do you think of Hal Hartleys movies? Also, I really like the concept of 'Running Time'. Any chance I could read your script?

Cheers,

James Hodgson

Dear James:

I've only seen two of Mr. Hartley's films, but they both seemed like pretentious bores. He didn't seem to have the slightest clue how to tell a story. As to you reading the "RT" script, well, I don't mind, but how do you intend to get it? By the way, what do you do on Xena that I would have missed you on the set?

Josh

Name:Beth Smarr
E-mail: bsmarr@zoomnet.net

Dear Josh:

I have just written the check for Running Time and it goes into the mail Monday. I have been enjoying your work on Xena, and in reading your answers to these questions, I presume you are still in New Zealand.

My question: what do you have on tap next? Another independent film? How does one finance an independent film? And (because I've been sitting at the computer for five hours and my mind and eyes are whirling in three different directions) how much satisfaction do you get from realizing your own stories vs. directing those of others?

Beth O'Crosseyed

Dear Ms. O'Crosseyed:

That is a good question. I get much more satisfaction telling my own stories, but I love the process of filmmaking and Xena has offered me a lot of that. I'm a better filmmaker now than before Xena. Now I would like to apply that to my next film. I have two projects: "If I Had a Hammer," about the end of the folk era, and "Warpath," a western starring Bruce Campbell. I will continue to pursue both.

I hope you like "Running Time" and I appreciate you and all of the other adventurous souls who are the very first to purchase the movie and truly support independent filmmaking.

Josh

Name: Tony

E-mail: Chakram71201@sprynet.com

Dear Josh:

I recently read your comments on working with Anthony Quinn. I know some actors can be a bit more difficult to work with than others. I was wondering, in all your years of directing, which actors/actresses have you enjoyed working with the most. I'm not necessarily speaking in terms of acting ability, but more in terms of personality and just being a joy to be around on set.

Also being a huge Xena fan I have to ask, is working with Lucy and Renee a pleasant experience, or would they fit into the Athony Quinn catagory. They seem really nice and sweet from what I've seen of them, but you know them better than I do and I wonder if you actually look forward to working with them.

Thanks.

Tony

Dear Tony:

I have never worked with anyone else that even approaches being like Anthony Quinn. I enjoy working with almost all actors and, if I may say so, I think actors like working with me. As for Lucy and Renee, they are both a complete and total joy to work with. They are both nice, funny people that are doing everything within their means to make each scene as good as it can be. I can ask no more of any actor. As to the actors I enjoy working with the most -- and certainly Lucy and Renee are up near the top of the list -- I particularly enjoy working with Ted Raimi and Bruce Campbell, both of whom are good friends of mine and they both make me laugh like an idiot.

Josh

Name: Shirley LeVasseur

E-mail: data@powerlink.net

Dear Josh:

My tape of "Running Time" arrived today, and I don't regret skipping a couple utility payments to get it.

I started out watching it trying to see if I could tell where hidden cuts were. That didn't last long, as the movie just sucked me right in and I was along for the ride. I don't want to give away anything in case you post this, but the ending really surprised me. Everyone involved should be proud of this film. (I'd like to add that no self-respecting Bruce Campbell fan should be able to live without "Running Time" in their collection. That goes double for female fans.)

Damn, I knew I was going to sound like a fan girl. Screw it, I loved the movie and I don't care who calls me a suck-up for telling you so.

--Shirley

P.S. Thanks for the autograph

Dear Shirley:

I am deeply and sincerely pleased that you like the film. Now just get 5000 of your very best friends to buy the tape, too.

Josh

Name:nancy egan

E-mail: negan@TheTahoe.net

Dear Josh:

Thank you for being accessible to us like this! I REALLY enjoy your work on XWP!! Q- I'm a massage therapist in Lake Tahoe and have worked on many film crew members and actors when they are in this area shooting. I've also been hired outright by production co's to go on location and work. Are any massage therapists hired by Renaissance to work on location for XWP and Herc? If so, are they New Zealanders or have they come from the US?

Thanks for your time.

Dear Nancy:

Everybody that works on Herc and Xena are New Zealanders, except the directors, Kevin Sorbo and Renee O'Conner. I also don't believe they hire massage therapists on TV shows, unless it's the star's own massage therapist.

Josh

Name:Mary McDonough

E-mail: mary@bfd.com

Dear Josh:

The remake, or "reshoot"(use of original script, original storyboards) of "Psycho," has raised some questions. Why would a director choose to redo another director's work? Doesn't that defeat the purpose of directing? If this "reshoot" is financially successful, what impact would that have on the film industry?

Yours,

~Mary =)

Dear Mary:

There's certainly nothing new about remakes in Hollywood. This is the 2nd Hitchcock remake this year (there was already that failed "Dial M For Murder" remake the name of which I forget). I'm of the belief that anyone who thinks a remake or film version of a TV show is a good idea ought to be forced to walk up and down Hollywood Blvd. all day naked except for a sandwich board stating, "I have no imagination."

Josh

Name: Shirley LeVasseur
E-mail: data@powerlink.net

Dear Josh:

(my thoughts on reading "Truth & Lies")

Now this is what it is I like about you, your willingness to absolutely truthful. What is art without truth but a meaningless pile of steaming commercial bullshit? Too few folks these days seem to realize that each act of self censorship makes it more difficult to be spontaneously creative.

It took a lot of balls to post that "Saving Private Ryan" article, but I thought posting the "Evil Dead Journal" in its entirety was even better. How many other people would be willing to reveal, for all the world to see, something so personal, private, and human? Being truthful about oneself has got to be the most difficult thing there is.

Sincerely,
Shirley

Dear Shirley:

Thank you for the encouragement, I appreciate it. By the way, your tape of "Running Time" (as well as 30 others) have gone out. You should have it within 3 days. I'd be very interested to know what you first 30 people think of the film.

P.S. I forgot to autograph almost everybody's tape that asked me, but if you ask again I'll happily send you a new vid cover, signed (just send me your address). Having now become both distributor and manufacturer, I'm a tad overwhelmed.

Josh

Name:Malena

E-mail: malenema@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

Your website gives me reason to pause... It is well thought out and if nothing else, truthful. (I'm sure you'll be pleased to hear that!) However, having read all (I repeat, ALL) your assorted rantings and ravings, I am curious as to the tone of said rantings... Are you always so angry? Is there anything in "the business" that brings you joy? that you can commend to us, your faithful site visitors? Or is this merely an anger borne out of frustration? Don't get me wrong, you're a good read, but how is your psyche?

Dear Malena:

No, there is nothing in "the business" that brings me joy. There are quite a few movies that bring me joy (see "My Favorite Films" list), but not the film business itself. I think it's a poorly run industry populated with dim-witted idiots with no taste. I think that in the last 20 years the film industry has taken giant strides away from being an art form -- it is now pure commerce always aimed at the lowest common demoninator. As to the condition of my psyche, it's not as strong as it might be.

Josh

Name:(Name Removed)

E-mail:

Dear Mr. Becker:

Since you work semi-regularly for Renaissance pictures, I thought you could help me. I want to work over there in New Zealand for a summer(literally for food and a floor to sleep on) to see how the whole film making process works. If you think the idea is at all feasible, please tell me who to get in contact with at RP and how.

Thanks.

Dear (Name Removed):

Not to dampen your spirits, but I'd say it's not feasible. I don't know the laws, but can you just go to New Zealand and get a job? You can't from the U.S., you need a special work permit based on already having employment there. Also, what would you do? The low-end jobs on a film crew are production assistants (or "runners" as they're called in NZ) and the basis of the job is knowing where everything is located. Sorry.

Josh

Name:Emily Merkle
E-mail: muncie_girl@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

I am very happy to see that you finally have your very own website; you've saved me the trouble of making one for you myself, which I'd strongly considered over the last few years. I sincerely thank you for your contributions to the world of film. I've found your movies to be not only extraordinarily original, but also more than entertaining.

You named a good number of movies on your list that both pleased and surprised me, such as Reversal of Fortune, Glengarry Glen Ross, and Midnight Run; but I also noted that you admired several films of the noir/neo-noir genre such as Double Indemnity, Taxi Driver, L.A. Confidential, etc. while The Usual Suspects, one of the most widely appreciated movies inside and outside the industry, is absent. What is your opinion of this film?

Dear Emily:

I didn't sit all the way through it, not more than 45 minutes, and I was utterly and completely uninterested. I just saw "The Spanish Prisoner" today and it's that same sort of thing -- a mystery -- and I pretty much hate them all. You spend the entire movie confused for the sake a few twists. I don't think it's worth it.

Josh

Name:Joey Hargrove
E-mail: hargrjo@mail.auburn.edu

Dear Josh:

I am currently a student at Auburn University and am venturing slowly into the world of filmmaking. Although after having written one dissatisfying script and a revision of the same story that is currently in the works I am at a lull because of lack of funding and time. I want to thank you however for "The Need for Structure." It has given me a great deal of insight and some good advice.

My question stems from the second part of "The Need for Structure." I browsed through your list of favorite films and I sadly agree that there has been a decrease in quality movies in recent years. In part 2 of your essay you said that you probably enjoyed 5 or 6 movies from the last 8 years. What would they be? Why do they deserve to be on your list?

Thanks much for taking time out to read our letters (your fans I mean).
Keep up the wonderful work with Xena.

From one avid smoker to another :)
Joey

Dear Joey:

OK, let me think. In the last 8 years or so I have seriously liked: "Unforgiven," "Platoon," "Goodfellas,"

"Aliens," "Howard's End," "Groundhog's Day," "Biloxi Blues," "Roger & Me," and I suppose a couple of others, which are no doubt on my Favorite Film List. Why do they deserve to be on my list? Because I like them and it's my list.

Josh

Name: Alex Ford

E-mail: alsroom@tford.freeseerve.co.uk

Dear Josh:

Wow Josh! You replied within a day and that's pretty cool. After I sent you my E-Mail I read through your website and read a comment that you didn't think that any of the young directors were any good. Then I thought; Hmm Tarantino's young. So I checked your favourite film list. NO RESERVOIR DOGS! OK let's go to "P" NO PULP FICTION. AND NO JACKIE BROWN. OK let's go to "F" Tom Savini was in Dusk Till Dawn, WHAT!! IT'S NOT THERE! Any way thanks for giving an honest answer. I know this won't have any effect but it's not really Reservoir Dogs with teenagers. I just say that because people think it's a good film. Question: What is it you don't like about Tarantino? And how is Spielberg not a good story teller? Your body of work: Do you prefer working on Xena or Hercules?

Sincerely,

Alex Ford writer/director

PS In England we call these: (), brackets. What language do you speak? ENGLISH

Dear Alex:

We try to give good service here at Directing from the Edge. I believe that I explained myself very clearly about Spielberg in my "Saving Private Ryan" review. As for Mr. Quentin Tarantino (did you read my interview? There is also a review of "Jackie Brown" in "Summer Video Round-up 1998"), well, let my answer that with an anecdote: Eric Clapton was on The South Bank Show and explained to Melvyn Bragg about arriving in America 1967 with his band Cream. Clapton said that all the American bands just then were lame because "they hadn't listened to the proper records." He was referring to the blues and R&B. I believe that Quentin got stuck on too few movies and the wrong ones at that; all that French horseshit from the fifties and sixties. Combine that with his complete inability to tell a 3-act story, come up with an interesting shot, nor to tell any story in less than 160 minutes (or at least 2 out of 3) and what have you got? A lot of good actors swearing a lot for an excessively long time.

Josh

Name: Petra

E-mail: alienworld1@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

As a guest, I saw you and your film "Running Time" back in Urbana Illinois last year and enjoyed that night greatly. I also seem to remember Garry, the guy that does your website, being there. He is the same guy from that festival isn't he? Anyway, were you two friends before the fest or was it from the fest that you two met? Now for a film question, how close of a relationship do you have with the editors for Xena? Are they team players or do you feel they are saboteurs against your greater work? Your

website is a wonderful place to visit and I have sent Garry an e-mail telling him the same.

Thanks!

Dear Petra:

Yes, it's the very same Gerry (with an 'e') from Urbana. He and I had been e-mail buddies for a while, then I met him at the Chicago Underground Film Festival.

Both editors on Xena, Jim Pryor and Rob Field, are very nice, good-natured, hard-working guys. The editing process works like this: the editors assemble the show, the director gets 3 days to do whatever they'd like, then the producers can finally do whatever they'd like and that's how it airs. At least with my episodes I'd say that what you see is 90-95% what I had in mind.

Josh

Name: Jason Roth

E-mail: rothj@river.it.gvsu.edu

Dear Josh:

I've heard that you were having showings of Running Time on college campuses around the country. I attend Grand Valley State in west Michigan, I'm a member of Cinematech, our little on-campus movie group. We show a variety of films on 16mm legitimately. Would it be possible to rent a 16mm print of Running Time sometime next year for an on campus showing?

Thanks!

A fan

Jason Roth

Dear Jason:

Yes, that would be possible. Just let me know.

Josh

Name: Pastor Deb Grant

E-mail: revdeb@compuserve.com

Dear Josh:

How do you know when you've done a good job?

Dear Deb:

A big portion of doing a good job on TV is coming in on time and on schedule. As for doing a good job in movies, well, just getting them made at all is pretty good. This then begs the next question, "What is good?" "The English Patient," for instance, won 9 Academy Awards and I think it's crap, but obviously others think it's good. For many people, if a film makes money then it's good. Making money isn't the issue to me. This may well be out of self-defense, however, since none of my films have made much money. Quite frankly, if I made the movie I wanted to make, without interference, then I'm happy.

Josh

Name: Carl Rasta
E-mail: detectivenobody@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I really enjoyed your last episode "In Sickness & In Hell" and think these namby-pamby pasty-faced critics don't know what the hell they're talking about when they slam the funny episodes like yours. If it weren't for the comedy aspects of Xena it wouldn't be worth a shit as a program. The comedies are the only redeeming episodes for what is a very unrealistic program. Now my question, what will your next project be and will it include Bruce Campbell?

Do you use Bruce in your films because you're buddies and he will work cheaper for you than others or is it because you feel he's better than anyone else you could find, or is it a mixture of both or some other reason? I think it's really cool that you have this website and wondered what made you want to do it? It's just so awesome that you don't shut yourself off from us movie-bumkins.

Thanks,
Carl

Dear Carl:

I've written a script called "If I Had a Hammer" about the end of the folk movement that I would like to make and that would not include Bruce, since there's no part for him. Bruce and I have a western story we'd like to make into a film, but I'm not sure what his schedule is like these days. We'll see.

As to why I work with Bruce, without being sarcastic, he's one of my very best friends and I enjoy every minute I spend with him.

Josh

Name: Alex
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Although I don't watch Hercules, I do watch Xena: Warrior Princess (I know what you're thinking (actually I don't) but I genuinely think it's good) I just found this website when I typed "Directing Methods" on the ALTAVISTA search engine. It's cool you did stuff on Evil dead and Know Bruce Campbell, I've got all three films on video.

I've written a script and I sent it to a company called McDougal films based in Chicago, The guy there read it (apparently the only script he read out of 40 sent to him) and thought it was really good. I want to become a feature film director soon (I'm 18 now) and thought If I sell a script or two I would eventually get the chance to direct. I actually E-Mailed the President about my script because of his Dreamworks connections, but I don't really want to go that route (But it would help). I would like to ask you if you would like to read my script. So, would you like to read my script? Here is the logline and story:

[removed portion]

Reservoir Dogs with Teenagers?

Sorry for the huge size of this E-Mail,

Sincerely,

Alex Ford

PS- I apologize for my extensive use of brackets.

Dear Alex:

In all sincerity, I don't want to read your script or anyone else's, for that matter. I deleted your story synopsis out of this, but it's not my kind of thing at all. Since I couldn't stand "Reservoir Dogs," why would I want to see it with teenagers? Also, I think you need to read my essay "The Need For Structure."

As for selling "a script or two," if you can figure out how to do it, God bless you. I've written 28 feature scripts and sold one. It's probably more difficult selling a spec script than getting an independent feature film made.

And as to your use of "brackets," what you keep using are called parenthesis, brackets look like this: [].

Josh

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