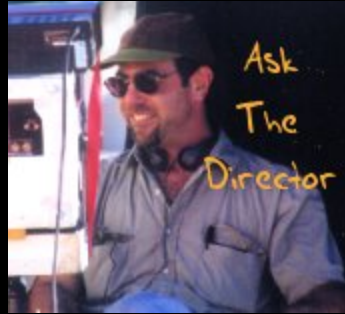


Josh Becker DGA

Directing From The Edge



Q & A Archive
Page 26

Name: DownUnder

E-mail:

Josh,

What's your relationship like (off the set) with Lucy and Rob? Do you hang out at their house and have tea and all? Do you ever hang out with Renee? If not, who do you hang out with when you are in New Zealand?

Cheers,
DownUnder

Dear DownUnder:

I haven't been hanging around with anyone, I'm too busy. I have several friends down here, as well. I haven't been to Rob and Lucy's this time, but I've been there several other times. Lucy is a lot of fun to work with.

Josh

Name: Russ

E-mail: russg@ghill98.freemove.co.uk

Hi Josh,

I recently visited USA and picked up a DVD copy of 'Running Time'. excellent film, I have listened to the commentary more than the original sound - cool. I am about to shoot my first 16mm film, it is for my University project - problem is all the tutors are giving me problems like maximum

10minutes of stock and making me cut down on script and telling me what cast and crew I need, what the f*** does a unit production manager do anyway and why would I need one on a short film - this university sucks big time. Any thoughts or comments would be appreciated!

Thanks a lot
Russ.

Dear Russ:

They sound like silly restrictions, but just run with them. If you stay in filmmaking you'll be hit with a zillion other restrictions along the way and it's your job to deal with them. So deal. And good luck.

Josh

Name: Angela
E-mail: ent.exch@dial.pipex.com

Dear Josh:

Ahh all great eps to give you the background on this upcoming ep and you are right Family Affair is a great episode, don't you just love the monster very lovable really, Renee does such a good job as Hope too.

Thanks for the reply oh and those biscuits are called hokey pokey squiggles if you are still in NZ you must pick up a packet, they are a prepacked orgasm.

Take care

Angela

Dear Angela:

Yes, Renee is very good as Hope. This episode ought to have a couple of good laughs, as well as plugging a hole in the Xena chronology. I worked for the very first time with Kevin Smith yesterday, which was quite fun. Good God, that guy is ripped. It was so hot on the stage that Kevin only put his heavy leather shirt on for the takes, and at one point Ted walked past muttering, "I become more hideous by the moment." I'm still laughing.

Josh

Name: Angela
E-mail: ent.exch@dial.pipex.com

Josh,

Just out of interest when you do a show like Xena or Hercules, do they fill you in on any plot you have missed to help you with your interpretation of the story and characters. I know the last episode you filmed was Kindred Spirits now with the next one you are going back to what happened at the end of season 3, but I was just curious if they tell you what has happened to the characters to help you along? Hey by the way tell Rob he should give you some kind of momento seeing as you have directed and ep in every season, you should get a silver chakram of your own, hell if you don't like it you could always sell it on Ebay.

Another quick question have you ever had any of those chocolate squiggles biscuits they have in New Zealand if not try them, they really are yummy.

Dear Angela:

Rob sent me a bunch of episodes to watch, like "Family Affair" (which is a damn good epsiode), "Sacrifice 1 & 2," and "Deja Vu All Over Again."

Josh

Name: F. R.

E-mail: swanlandprods@yahoo.com

Dear Josh,

Howdy! Hope the work on your "Xena" episode is continuing to go well. It's been really cool to read your reports as you progress from prep to actual shooting. It's very much like reading some of the production diaries you have posted elsewhere on your site (albeit, understandably, less detailed -- naturally, you can't reveal too much till the episode airs), and it makes me very curious to see the final product on the air in a few months!

Related to this ep, I seem to remember you answered me a little while back that you usually get about 3 or so days to edit, and then after you're done the producers make their cut, and you said that the two versions have been pretty close. So, here are my questions about that: Do you do your editing in New Zealand or back in Los Angeles? When you turn your cut over to the producers, do you meet with them in person for notes/discussion, or do they just do their editing by themselves without your input? As stars of the series, do Lucy Lawless & Renee O'Connor get any input into editing?

Well, lots of continuing good wishes, and have a great, Southern Hemisphere kinda day!

Best,
F. R.

Dear F.R.:

I finished shooting today and all went well. Now, regarding the editing, "Xena" is cut in L.A. and "Jack" and "Cleo" were cut in New Zealand. I've done all my cutting in L.A. except for my two "Jacks." When I turn in my cut, I'm done. They do not inform or consult me after that, I see it when they send me the tape. Rob will tell me if he cuts a whole scene. He's always right, too. He's a good editor. I don't know what Lucy or Renee say about the editing, they're usually pretty busy shooting.

Josh

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

Josh,

I think FR here and maybe a couple others misunderstood what you meant. You're not saying that filmmaking as an artform SHOULD be considered a collaborative process without any real leader. Are you? Maybe I'm an idealist, but I've always felt that there should be a single person 'directing' the entire operation, from start to finish. The minute you start making everyone on the set equally responsible for the finished film is the minute you've lost all the art in the medium, I think. Obviously filmmaking is hugely collaborative. But I don't even know if that's a thing that should be celebrated. It seems to me that, especially in the hollywood system, this only serves to dilute the final product. Ok, rambling a bit here..

Basically I'm against this WGA notion that the writers are just as responsible for the film as the director. I don't think that's the case any more. Rarely, if ever, are the original scripts shot. They go through rewrite after rewrite, and then on top of that there's the director's interpretation. I think it's that interpretation which makes the film good or bad art (or commercial garbage, whatever). The script is the blueprint, it's not the house. It's a blueprint that's usually re-done by numerous people prior to its final building stage. So here's my suggestion: "A film by _director_", from "an idea by _writer_". Because at least for the hollywood productions (which is mostly what WGA is talking about), there is no single writer involved. At best there's a single guy that came up with the idea for the film, that has his idea re-written, re-thought, and re-interpreted. I hate the idea of writing partners, and I hate the idea of numerous people trying to take credit for what SHOULD be a single vision behind a film. I don't see the writers out there working with the actors, choosing lenses, etc. And I don't think they should.

If you want to be a filmmaker, learn to be a director. These guys need to accept that the writer for hire is not likely to maintain his artistic integrity or have any control over the final product. That's just the way the business works. Personally, I believe that the best situation would be one in which the artist is both a writer AND a director, and handles both. Such as yourself, Josh. Otherwise everyone starts misinterpreting each other's work, changing things around to suit their own agenda. And the final product is diluted. Even guys like Paul Thomas Anderson, total hacks, get

some of my respect because at least they're being faithful to the process. They write down their idea, then the film it. On the other hand, there's guys like Hitchcock who didn't write their scripts, but still attach a certain vision or whatever to their films that makes them their own. So I believe they are legitimate as well. Even the directors for hire, like Michael Bay's, Tony Scott's, and even Spielberg these days add some sort of personal style to a film that makes it distinctively their own. Ultimately the film, and the a film by credit, should be left for the director. Otherwise, in my mind, the auteur theory (and filmmaking as an artform) goes out the window.

Jim

Dear Jim:

I think you make a valid point, but personally I've never bought the Auteur Theory -- this is a vastly collaborative medium. You work on a TV show and they could pretty easily make these things without the director. Back in the old days, the only way a director was going to get his name above the title was if his name sold tickets, like Hitchcock or Frank Capra, although these guys were frequently their own producers. But if Michael Bay steps in at the last minute and directs a film that producer Jerry Bruckheimer has been developing for two years, is it really A Michael Bay Film? I also think you're short-shrifting the writers a bit. Certainly in the Hollywood system the writer is always getting re-written, and that's a big reason why Hollywood product sucks so bad. But a good director really can't make a bad script into a good film. Whereas, a mediocre director can make a good film out of a good script. I think my rule is the best, do at least two of the three main jobs and get the possessory credit.

Josh

Name: Cynthia E. Jones
E-mail: cynthiaejones@hotmail.com

Dear Josh,

Thank you for your astonishingly prompt responses. You are amazing. I understand about you not being able to give out any info on Ted Raimi...I just thought, since Bruce Campbell and you are both so outgoing with your internet selves, maybe I stood a chance of sending a cosmic message to Ted. Oh, well. I hope he can pick up my psychic vibes I'm sending him....

"Saving Silverman." Just went to a press screening last night and gee. I think this country is going pure LCD. It's as though people are afraid to be clever, 'cos someone might not get it. Isn't that the point? Don't we make movies to connect with other people who think like us? Oh? No? We make them to make money? Okay, so if they insult our intelligence, who wins? We feel bad about paying for them...

Regarding the young female Coppola, "Life Without Zoe" sucked, and "The Virgin Suicides" is great. I don't know how much help she got, or if it was just some sort of osmosis, but if that film is any indicator of her directing

talent, I might like her more than her time-wasting, non-script-using father. (This is "Cotton Club," "One from the Heart" and "Dracula" I'm referring to-- I still love the "Godfather" one and two, as well as "Apocalypse Now")

I'm having an impossible time finding "TSNKE" in stores. Do I have to order it online? Perhaps I'm in the wrong stores. Also....Do you know if I can find the film "Iggy Vile, M.D." anywhere? I found it on the IMDb as something that Ted Raimi wrote, and I'm interested in how well he writes. I know it's a career he wishes to pursue. Since it was made-for-TV, maybe it'll eventually surface on video...but those things are sketchy at best.

How is the weather in New Zealand? California was fantastic the last few days, sunny and 70 degrees, but yesterday it started with the cold winds now and that's no good. Sunny and with icy winds. Yikes. But...at least we're not in New York!

Have a wonderful Wednesday,

cindy

Dear Cindy:

It was 65 and sort of gray and rainy today, but we shot right through it. It's supposed to rain tomorrow, too, but we're inside. Regarding TSNKE, just click on it on the front page and you can order it.

Josh

Name: Jonathan Kenworthy
E-mail: kenny.plisskin69@virgin.net

Dear Josh:

I'll get straight to the crunch. At college, the class I'm in was given the task of shooting a music video (to go with an already established song), Anyway I chose to use the medium that is skateboarding as my content. This is were my problem surfaces, Should I go with my gut instinct and shoot it as I want to present it (I was criticised by a couple of die hard skaters for not having enough insight into the skating world), or stick to the rigid documentary style skate videos seem to go with (which is the path my tutor believes I should take)?

Thanks
Jonathan

P.S. While you are in New Zealand does that mean you get to watch that magnificent (Honest) soap "Neighbors"?

Dear Jonathan:

Which way will make a better movie? That's the one you should choose. BTW, I'm not watching much TV right now.

Josh

Name: F. R.
E-mail: swanlandprods@yahoo.com

Dear Josh,

At the risk of sounding 100% kiss-ass, you are *so* right about possessory credit! A film is certainly due to so many people from top to bottom, it's hard to say it's "a film by..." any one person (and I agree about how ridiculous it is that some guy who did the third rewrite on a movie that got big boxoffice but who has never set foot on a set in his life gets a directing deal and the "A Joe Blow Film" title). I think your solution of requiring the person getting the possessory do at least 2 out of the 3 key jobs makes sense, because there certainly *are* people who fulfill that requirement, rare though they may be. Of course, in the case of most films, I think both directors and writers should be too embarrassed about how horrible the movie is to want to claim that it is "a film by" them...

I also strongly agree with you that the residual picture really needs an overhaul. It aggravates me no end that the studios and networks cry poverty, then merge & acquire each other in multibillion dollar deals, and announce deals for huge lines of credit from foreign banks and distributors, etc. They've got the dough, and they've got it mainly because writers, actors, directors and all the below-the-line people have worked their asses off making films & TV that the public pays to see. Whether the resulting pic is "art" or "crass," whether it's "good" or "crap," doesn't even matter so much; the audience is hungry for entertainment, and wants to see what's available, especially if it has a (shudder) Mel Gibson or Meg Ryan in it. I mean, no one says, "Hey, honey, Paramount has a new movie opening this weekend; let's run right out and see it!" Nope, it's due to the stars, or the reputation of the writers/directors/producers ("A New Film From the Makers of ...!", etc.), that tickets are sold. The creative types absolutely deserve a piece of the theatrical/DVD/Internet/ancillary profit pie.

With all the scripts that you have written, are you a WGA member in addition to being in the DGA?

It was very interesting reading your response to Blake about the crazies who post here. I have been curious why you put up (or put up *with*?) screech from the occasional loony, but I assumed that it was because you were simply supporting free speech. Yikes, if we're only seeing the tip of the iceberg of what you receive, I really *am* frightened about the number and severity of the hateful or sick people who are out there. I would say yes, thank you, for letting us have a peek into the state of things on the Internet, and in the world at large. Sheesh.

Well, on a much happier note, best of luck with filming your episode, now that it's that time, and here's wishing you a shoot that's under budget, finishes ahead of schedule, and is just a total blast to work on!

Good on ya, mate!,
F. R.

Dear F.R.:

Well, I got through the first day without any huge mishaps (knock on wood). Lucy and Ted were both wonderful and the crew is made up of mainly funny, upbeat people, so this my idea of a great time. I even had a stunt man deliver a line today and do a terrific job. I am not a Writer's Guild member, although I do receive Writer's Guild residuals. Since they do not officially recognize any of my independent features as actual credits, I would presently be able to join as an associate member, which I see no need to do. It would cost me money and get in the way of my independent filmmaking.

Josh

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

Josh,

Don't mind the weirdos that can't spell. They ain't worth the dern worries.(istalkkids@hotmail.com????? Did you notice that? What a fruit.)

Hey, you may seem a bit arrogant to some folk who happen to love the pictures you tear apart, and (as you've even mentioned) TSNK...E ain't no academy award winner, but you still have one helluva refreshing attitude and "Running Time" was definately NOT boring. I'm on your side.

It's also a real pleasure for me to be able and submit questions, no matter how trivial or dumb, to a somewhat well known filmmaker and not have to worry about getting an answer.

We all wanna see HAMMER too. With all the fans you make with this site, I'm a thinkin' that we mightn't be able an' wip us up some hype for ya!

Carry on, Mr. Becker!

Best regards,

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

Thanks, I appreciate it. I get mean horrible letters all the time. I got one today which I didn't answer. I do answer some of them mainly so that you Q&A readers can see what kind of nuts are out there. When I open the those emails first thing in the morning I'm occasionally shocked. I wish I

could even start selling "Hammer" online, but I can't. There are a number of rights issue that have to be dealt with still. Sorry. Who knows, maybe I'll even get a distributor.

Josh

Name: F. R.
E-mail: swanlandprods@yahoo.com

Dear Josh,

It's been a pleasure reading your continuing posts from New Zealand. It's obvious from the totally upbeat tone of what you've been writing lately how stoked (sorry, I live in Los Angeles) you are to be working on this episode. I really appreciate, and I'm sure the other regular posters also do, that you're still taking time to keep up with this board and to keep us informed of your progress even though you're so busy right now.

So, my question today: I was wondering if there's any reaction overseas to the impending writers' and actors' strikes up here. Do you have any thoughts about them yourself -- do you think the strikes are inevitable? Do you think the concessions each guild is asking for (Internet and new media residuals, change of "possessory" credit from directors only to writers, rights of writers to visit sets, etc.) seem reasonable?

Well, cheers, mate!
F. R.

Dear F.R.:

I start shooting tomorrow morning at 7:00 A.M. and I think we'll be all right. Or, as they say here, "She'll be right, mate." The only reaction I've heard here regarding the possible strikes are the hope that more production work will end up down here. Perhaps it will, too. I'm entirely in agreement that the residual system needs to be reworked with the many new, emerging markets. In regard to the possessory credit (meaning, "A Josh Becker Film" or "A Film by Josh Becker"), I'm in basic disagreement with all the guilds. I think you should only be able to take that credit if you do at least two of the three main jobs, writing, producing and directing. It annoys the shit out of me seeing "A Film by Joe Blow" when it's their first film and I've never heard of them.

Josh

Name: jeremy
E-mail: istalkkids@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

you sound like a real arrogant prick for someone who makes some real shitty films. I read your little evildead journal,you sound like a whiny little bitch too. the only reason your in the industry is cuz your riding sam raimis coat-tails .running time is awful thou shall...is boring.where do you get off criticizing other peoples work that is so obviously superior.you should be a janitor instead.idiot.fuck you. www.sickeningconcepts.com

Dear Shitface:

Who the fuck are you? Nobody. So drop dead.

Josh

Name: Aaron Graham
E-mail: agraham83@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Just watched "Unforgiven" on dvd, it has to be one of the best westerns ever put on film. What I try to do is break down each shot in my head as I watch it. (Like a long shot, or whatever). But some of the time I find it hard to tell. So I was just wondering if you could recommend any books (or even a website) that explains camera shots more clearly, I feel that's one area where I'm lacking in cinema knowledge.

And, by the way, I keep track of all the movies I see as well. All on index cards, with a little ratings system. (I know its nerdy, but Peter Bogdanovich used to do it, and now I find out that you do as well).

Anyway, have fun in New Zealand!

Dear Aaron:

I think the best book explaining camera set-ups is "Shot By Shot" by Steven Katz, I believe it is. It's on my [Recommended Reading list](#). And I really do love "Unforgiven."

Josh

Name: Cynthia E. Jones
E-mail: cynthiaejones@hotmail.com

Dear Josh,

Yes, "Seconds" was a fantastic movie. And, not only was Bob Evans pure hilarity in his assessment of "The Saint," but he also thought "Sliver" was

going to be a huge thing, and that movie sucked so bad it became my new "all time low" reference, i.e. "Well, at least it wasn't Sliver."

Ahh..Henri-George Cluzot's "The Wages of Fear." Now that's a great movie. People ask me what the greatest suspense film of all time is? There ya go. Now, here's the question: is 3515 a random number or do you actually write down all the films you see and count them?

'Virgin Suicides' - what'd you think? Sofia has gotten a lot better since "Life without Zoe."

Also...(this is so much fun..most people don't understand me 'cos I like movies TOO MUCH) have you seen "Deranged?" Ed Gein...Psycho...you know.

I noticed most of your favorites are old movies. Are there any recent directors that excite you? It seems they're few and far between. The indies are being purchased by larger companies and compromising the quality of new, smaller films. Very few new films excite me.

One last question, and then I'll let you go for now. Could you get me Ted Raimi's email address or snail mail address? I'd like to contact him and am hitting a wall here. The closest I've gotten is Monica Gillen through Creation Entertainment, whom I've been talking to this week, but no dice.

Thanks,

cindy

Dear Cindy:

I've always liked movies too much, so I understand. I haven't seen "Virgin Suicides," but "Life Without Zoe" was as awful and amateurish as anything I've ever seen, particularly given the amount of backing she has. I have not seen "Deranged," either, but I sure do like "Psycho." No, 3515 is not an estimate, I do keep a list of every movie I've ever seen, as well as a list of every book I've ever read. No one can say I've wasted my life. Regarding Mr. Ted Raimi, who is a very private guy, I won't give out his address and I'm sure he wouldn't want me to. Sorry.

Josh

Name: Dustin Glasco
E-mail: dustglas@hotmail.com

hey josh

i'm taking a preproduction class right now and we have to budget the first twenty minutes of a film and by breaking down the script. a subject i'm sure you know lots about. so being the fan i am of your work i elected to use TSNKE. i've already got alot of info on the budget from the dvd alone but i was curious if you had any of your old stripboards or budgeting breakdown

sheets left. well even if you don't, this project was a nice excuse to write you and let you know how much i've enjoyed your films.

looking forward to hammer,

dustin

Dear Dustin:

Thanks. No, I haven't got any of that stuff left from TSNKE. Action Pictures has been defunct for 15 years. I must say that I rather enjoy breaking a script down and scheduling it, something I don't usually get to do except on my own films. It's a game of logic. Have fun.

Josh

Name: Randy

E-mail:

Hi Josh,

While you're in New Zealand, could you take some pictures of your last adventure directing a "Xena" episode? Would love to see some behind-the-scenes stuff of Renee and Lucy, and the rest of the crew.

Thanks,
Randy

Dear Randy:

I'll see if I can't sneak a couple, but we're actually not supposed to take pictures on the set.

Josh

Name: Cynthia E. Jones

E-mail: cynthiaejones@hotmail.com

Dear Josh,

I just wanted to let you know that I love the film "Lunatics: A Love Story." I've been looking for your name in the Writing/Directing universe since 1993 wondering what the hell you've been up to. Finally, my friend wised me up to the IMDb.com (with which I'm sure you're familiar) and I looked you up there last week. That lead me to finding out you had directed Herc and Xena episodes and then I saw your name in the credits for "Evil Dead"

when I watched it on DVD the other day. Ah, yes, it's all coming together now. It's so funny how the world works that way.

So...I guess if I have a question, it's "are you happy?" Are there any recent films that you're working on that you're particularly proud of? "Lunatics" showed promise, and I want to watch you grow as a filmmaker.

I see you're into Orson Welles. I, too, am a rather obsessed film fanatic/maker. My friend and I will be shooting a film this summer on digital video just to do it...my theory is, act like you have the job you want until someone decides to pay you for it. I'm a professional photojournalist, but filmmaking really makes me happy. The editing is the most satisfying part of the process.

I was glad to see that you're a J.D. Salinger fan. Have you ever been mad that he said "Catcher" couldn't ever be filmed? I thought that was a rad decision...making sure nobody fucks up your story, ever, because Salinger knows that people think of films as the "final" version of a book. I couldn't help but notice that all of your favorite books are about films, filmmaking, or are novels which were turned into films, except maybe 5 of them. Not that this is a bad thing, it's just funny because my reading habits are similar. I just got through reading "The Kid Stays in the Picture" by the extraordinarily arrogant Robert Evans. Have you read that one? I love the HITCHCOCK/TRUFFAUT book as well. I remember I had heinous late fees at the library from that one.

Well, it's good to know that you're working and doing all kinds of groovy things. Hopefully, you'll drop me a line someday and we'll discuss James Wong Howe or something.

sincerely,

cindy

<http://cynthiaejones.tripod.com>

(my site...a bunch of photos.)

Dear Cynthia:

I'm quite proud of my new film, "If I Had a Hammer," as well as the film before, "Running Time." Am I happy? Sure, in my own moderate way. I feel particularly good when I'm doing what I love--directing--and getting paid for it. Yes, many of the books I love were made into films. My life is very caught up in movies in many ways. And yes, I did read "The Kid Stays in the Picture" by the ridiculously arrogant Robert Evans. I took particular amusement in that the picture he's about to make when writing the book, which he predicts will be the biggest "franchise" ever, was "The Saint," which dropped dead. I've read "Hitchcock/Truffaut" several times. I think it's a great book. I'm also a fan of the great James Wong Howe, and I think he and John Frankenheimer sort of established the look of modern movies in "Seconds."

Josh

Name: Angela
E-mail: ent.exch@dial.pipex.com

Dear Josh:

Congrats on getting to direct an episode of Xena in every season that is great. Have fun down in NZ, Xena is great fun and will be much much missed, I believe you get the episode explaining how Gabby got out of that pit, that will be some episode, some explaining to do, but knowing your eps in the best it will be a good un.

Take care

Angela

Dear Angela:

That is indeed the episode I'm doing. It seems to be coming together, too.

Josh

Name: Trouble
E-mail: from hell

Dear Josh:

I just want to say that youre favorite film list sucks. If this represent youre way of inspiration. WELL THEN YOU ARE STUPID STUPID STUPID-

Dear Trouble:

No, you're stupid! Nah, nah!

Josh

Name: Angela L. Wheaton
E-mail: angela.wheaton@snet.net

Hello Josh!

I am organizing an Upcoming Charity auction for a church to raise money for an elevator for the handicapped. I was wondering if you wouldn't mind donating one of your autographed items for it? If not, that's quite alright as I understand. If so, I would give you full credit and put a link to your OFFICIAL site.

Many Thanks for your time!

Sincerely,

Angela aka ALWheaties

P.S. So far Claire Stansfield, Adrienne Wilkinson, Tony Todd and others have sent in items. I'd be so pleased to add yours as well!!! :) If you'd like to see a past online charity event I did for the Make-A-Wish Foundation it is at: <http://alwheaties.com/Benefit.html>

Dear Angela:

I'd be more than happy to donate an autographed photo or something, but right now I'm in New Zealand and I'll be back in the U.S. on Feb. 18. Could you send your request again when I'm back and I'll follow up on it promptly. Good luck.

Josh

Name: Barbara Frank
E-mail: bfrank@transpack.com

Dear Josh:

I see that one of your favorite films is "The Little Kidnappers" (1953). It's one of my favorites too. I recorded it a number of years ago but then lost the tape. I'd really like to get a copy of this movie but can't find it anywhere. Can you help me?

Dear Barbara:

I went to [Movies Unlimited](#) to check for you, but their site is closed right now. It's not available at Amazon. Try checking M.U. later. It's a wonderful little film, though. The two little boys were given special Academy Awards that year because they were so good. My late friend Rick was friends with one of them in Hollywood in the 1970s.

Josh

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

Dear Josh:

Do you ever check out the message boards on the IMDB website? Some

pretty lively debating goes on there. In particular the section devoted to westerns, these guys do love their shoot 'em ups and rigorously defend their heroes, especially John Ford.

Dear Alan:

I've never been there, but honestly, John Ford needs no defense. In something like 18 months he made "Drums Along the Mohawk," "Stagecoach," "The Grapes of Wrath" and "How Green Was My Valley." He doesn't need anybody standing up for him, his films do just fine.

Josh

Name: F. R.
E-mail: swanlandprods@yahoo.com

Dear Josh,

Welcome to New Zealand, mate! Hope your prep down there is going well. Regarding Bruce Campbell's and his wife's comments on "Cast Away": boy! they just so could not be more right! This film might have made an interesting short film (with almost no dialogue or sound) about a man alone on an island, but instead it was a big Hollywood "everything's okay after all!" affair, and, yes, a long commercial for FedEx. And I wish someone would take away Helen Hunt's SAG card till she someday decides to start *acting* (she is just the exact same character in every film & TV show, and talk about wanting to be liked!), but that's another story.

This question is sparked by something you mentioned about jazz a few posts ago. I wonder if you've been watching the Ken Burns series on Jazz, and, if so, what is your opinion of his presentation?

Well, as I'm sure you're hearing all the time now, "G'day,"

F. R.

Dear F.R.:

G'day to you, too. Prep is going fine and I think we'll have an amusing episode. I watched the first 8 episodes of "Jazz," but will sadly miss the last two since I'm down here. I really like all of Ken Burns and Geoffrey Ward's documentaries. Mr. Ward, the writer of all of Ken Burns' docs, BTW, was formerly the editor of my favorite magazine, American Heritage. I enjoyed the first 8 eps very much and I learned quite a bit from them, too.

Josh

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

Josh,

Have you seen "My Own Private Idaho"? I just saw it and was appalled. Not because it was a "bad" film, but because of the subject matter. I generally don't like Gus Van Sant films, but this one has been in my mind all week. I think I really liked it.

Did you ever see "Boys Don't Cry"? I just watched it a second time and must say it didn't play as well as it did the first. The performances, however, I still think are fantastic.

Sincerely,

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

I'm down in New Zealand right now and haven't had a chance to watch "Boys" yet, but I will. I did see "My Own Private Idaho" and was appalled because I did think it was bad film. I think that most films of Shakespeare's plays don't work, but having 17th century language in a modern story I found to be particularly idiotic. Also, the entire setting I simply found dull. And, of course, Keanu Reeves and River Phoenix can't carry the picture. In Mr. Van Sant's favor, I'm a very big fan of "Drugstore Cowboy, which I think is exceptionally good and quite well-directed.

Josh

Name: Tamandra
E-mail: TAMandraM@aol.com

Hi Josh

Hope your flight was a good one, I imagine you are well equipped with reading material. What's your current read?

That inane post by the religious zealot got me thinking about an answer you gave quite awhile ago as to you religious leanings. I think you mentioned Will and Ariel Durant, and I haven't found any titles by them while browsing. Can you reccomend some good books in this area, I enjoy reading books about the origins of religions.

Do you plan to catch any movies in NZ? I enjoy reading your reviews, wish you did it more often. I'm still trying to figure out what was wrong with Cast Away, the trailer is very enticing, and is in fact much better than the entire film.

Good luck directing the episode, look forward to it..glad Rob decided to put in a few comedies.

Take care,
Tamandra

Dear Tamandra:

I simply read the new American Heritage magazine. I then watched "Erin Brockovitch," which seemed like a TV movie with swearing. I had no sympathy for her character, and her using her kids as a ploy for sympathy and respect seemed like pure crap. Also, getting money for people that are already poisoned and dying seemed meaningless. I also watched "Wonder Boys," which was also a big nothing. It lurched from one dull, unbelievable scene to the next and seemed like it would never end. Regarding Will and Ariel Durant, their series of books on the history of the world begins with "Our Oriental Heritage," which I found pretty astonishing, though somewhat difficult. I haven't seen "Castaway," but Bruce Campbell and his wife called me immediately upon leaving the theater and were furious about how much they detested it. Bruce's comment was that Hanks, like Tom Cruise, will no longer allow any of the characters he plays to have any flaws at all--they are perfect, kind and friendly in all ways. Also, Bruce felt like the entire film was a product placement for FedEx and Spalding tennis balls, which he found insulting.

Josh

Name: Jo Monday
E-mail: jmonday@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

Actually it's a question...can you tell me how I can go about getting a copy of "If I Had a Hammer?" My son is in it and I would like to see it. Thanks very much.

P.S. Renee did a great job with the poster for the movie!

Dear Jo:

I must assume you are the parent of Kristian Monday. At this stage, you can't get a copy because they are not available. BTW, Kristian did a terrific job in the film.

Josh

Name: Bernie Bresnahan
E-mail: bernaise1@yahoo.com

Hi Josh,

Read over your thoughts on The Lifespan of Creativity, and was wondering how Orson Welles figures in?

My exposure to film is nowhere near as vast as yours (as to be expected as I work on Computer Networks) your perspective would be appreciated. Having just watched the newly released DVD "Touch of Evil", and came away feeling that I didn't see anything new or groundbreaking (for 1958). Which could be that I didn't know what to look for.

Anyhow, if you should happen to own/rent this DVD it does include 58 pages of memos that Welles wrote to the Studios on how to enhance the film, which made for facinating reading. Office politics simply amaze me..

Anyhow, hope the weather you're having in California hasn't been quite so bad as we've had it in Michigan.

Regards,

Bernard Bresnahan
Grand Ledge, Michigan

Dear Bernard:

I absolutely love "Touch of Evil" and feel that it would be groundbreaking any year it came out. I also think that the restored version, following Welles' notes, actually improved a great film. Orson Welles' lifespan of creativity was a particularly short one, lasting about two years, although he did pull it back together one more time, 16 years later, with "Touch of Evil."

Josh

Name: DREW
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

I was wondering if you've written any other articles for FILM THREAT, besides the Tarantino interview? Also, are those kind of writing gigs hard to get? Thanks.

Dear Drew:

I wrote six or seven articles for Film Threat, the Tarantino interview, the

Hollywood Walk of Fame, the History of the Oscars, an article about the Boston Film Festival, and some other stuff. I've known Chris Gore, the magazine's editor, since he started Film Threat in Detroit in the mid-80s. I read his very first issue and was so offended by the stupid opinions and inaccurate facts that I wrote him a nasty letter which he printed all of in his second issue. Actually, it wasn't a hard gig to get in that Chris offered me the job at a party. Sadly, however, when it came to paying he simply wouldn't do it, so I quit. The magazine dropped dead not too long afterward.

Josh

Name: Nemesis
E-mail: nemesis_lounge@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Jesus Christ may have been jewish, but more important than that is the fact that he was the son of God, and that puts him beyond any particular race. You see, it's not a problem for any christian to deal with the fact that Jesus was jewish, but it is a huge problem for any jew to deal with the fact that Jesus is the son of God, which is exactly what puts christians apart from those jews that won't accept Jesus Christ for what he really is. By the way, you don't need to remind us who killed Jesus, but you would be doing us a favor if you could refresh our memory by telling us who sold him out, looked the other way and maybe was even happy when the romans crucified him. Hehehehe.

Dear Nemesis:

Who sold out Jesus? Why, other creepy Christians, just like you. By the way, we're all children of God.

Josh

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

Josh,

This question comes from a high school history teacher friend of mine: are there any good WWII movies about the homefront, womens roles in the workplace, or propaganda, etc.

The educational well being of impressionable youth awaits your recommendation.

Good luck in New Zealand.....

Dear John:

One of my very favorite films (which I just purchased on DVD), "The Best Years of Our Lives," is about returning WW2 vets and their families. There's also "Till the End of Time." A famous film about women on the homefront is David Selznick's "Since You Went Away," with Claudette Colbert as the mother, Jennifer Jones as the older daughter, and Shirley Temple as the younger daughter, which I've always considered brilliant casting.

Josh

[BACK TO Main Archive Page](#)

[BACK TO Current Q&A](#)

Questions or Comments

BECKERFILMS SITE MENU

[\[Main \]](#) [\[T.V. Work \]](#) [\[Film Work \]](#) [\[From the Pen \]](#) [\[Favorite Films \]](#)
[\[Ask the Director \]](#) [\[AfterWord \]](#) [\[Links \]](#) [\[Reading List \]](#) [\[Website Team \]](#)

This site is the property of Josh Becker Copyright © 2001 Panoramic Pictures, All Rights Reserved.

