

Josh Becker DGA

Directing From The Edge



Q & A Archive
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Name: Mike
E-mail: mmanning@ix.netcom.com

Hi Josh,

Thanks for the sound-track-for-soaring suggestions.

I've been away for a while, so you might have already answered this and I missed it. How did things go with the UCLA Extension directing classes?

Dear Mike:

I didn't do it. They wanted a ten month comittment and I couldn't give it then, as I was up to my ears in the post production of "If I Had a Hammer." That's done now, but I haven't pursued the teaching direction. I'm not sure I'd want to stay in L.A. if I did.

Josh

Name: Jay Slater
E-mail: jayboy1969@hotmail.com

dear josh,

i am a cult movie journalist in the UK and plexus publishing are to release my new book dedicated to the italian horror movie. the book will be launched in america for halloween and it features guest reviews from filmmakers such as brian yuzna, alex cox, hg lewis, lloyd kaufman, nacho cerda, david schow and many, many more.

would you care to accept my invitation of joining this very exciting project with a review? if so, i can propose that you tackle antonio margheriti's cannibal apocalypse. please let me know if this is acceptable. this is a fun project and many of the contributors have enjoyed giving praise to the films in question or taking potshots.

i look forward to hearing from you.

sincerely,

jay slater
[editor]

Dear Jay:

I wish you all the best on your project, but I hate Italian horror films. I don't think I could even sit through one of them at this point. If you wanted a review of an Italian neo-realist film, that would interest me. If you wanted a review of a Val Lewton horror film, that I'd do. Thanks anyway.

Josh

Name: Tony Mitchell
E-mail: mitch_2209@hotmail.com

Hi Josh,

I'd be interested to hear your comments on this: it seems that almost ALL of the classic and successful films of all time have been set in the past with a few set in the future. Hardly any are set in the present (although I'm sure you will be able to give some examples). Why do you think this is? Why does it appear necessary to draw on events and settings in the past in order for a film to be successful? I was just wondering.

Thanks.
Tony

Dear Tony:

As storytellers we have about 10,000 years of human history to work with. Written language didn't come in until about 5000 years ago, and decent historical records didn't really kick in until about 2500 years ago with the Roman Republic. That's the canvas one has to work on. Right now, and for the past 20 years or so, Hollywood mainly makes contemporary stories. If you begin your pitch now with, "This story takes place in the 1920s . . ." you're pretty much a dead duck right away. Hollywood executives hear that it's a period story and immediately believe it will cost an extra \$50 million, as though period detail were nearly as expensive as the cheapest movie star that won't sell one ticket. I personally like period stories. Of my four

films, two are period stories, as well as a number of my scripts. Without going through all of the Best Pictures, I'd bet that the majority are contemporary stories.

Josh

Name: Kara
E-mail: velt.twins@home.com

Dear Josh:

I love the great work you have done on Xena, are you planning on putting yourself into a scene or two of the final episodes??

Do you yourself, think it is wrong to name a baby after a character on tv/movies? I named my 9 month old "Xena Ray-Anne". I ask because my mom has refused to see her since her birth because of her name. She hates the name.

Keep up the FANTASTIC WORK!!!

P.S. I would love to see you direct a XENA MOVIE w/Kevin Sorbo as closure for the series.

Dear Kara:

It wouldn't be appropriate for the director to put themselves into scenes. On a movie maybe, but not a TV show. Meanwhile, if you like the name Xena, then it's a great name. When I was a kid, no one but me was named Josh and everyone thought it was very ridiculous. I lived through it. Now it's a popular name. Maybe Xena will become a popular name if you start it off.

Josh

Name: Steve Cole
E-mail: sscole@aol.com

Josh,

Please do me a favor and check out "Bottle Rocket" by Wes Anderson. I think you may actually enjoy it. Also, if you haven't seen "The Ice Storm", give it a go. It's a pretty good film. I'd really like to hear your opinion.

Steve

Dear Steve:

I will definitely check out "Bottle Rocket" when it comes past my face on cable. I've seen "The Ice Storm" a couple of times. I don't think it's a great movie, mainly because it has such a weak, dull lead character. It is very evocative, though, and I loved the actual ice storm. I thought the kid on the guard rail at the end was pretty spectacular, too.

Josh

Name: Julie Johnson
E-mail: juliejhnsn7@aol.com

Dear Josh, (sorry this is so long)

I'm glad I finally got to see Lunatics: A Love Story. Very creative and funny. Ted is great and lovable as always and Deborah Foreman is excellent. I'd love to see the original rated R/NC 17 script. I think I remember your mentioning that the script was trapped on an old Apple somewhere, I can sympathize I have a large chunk of my undergrad papers being held hostage by an embarrassingly outdated Macintosh Performa 200. In the end though, I like the "good-natured simpleton" version just fine-- sometimes a little sweetness is refreshing. Who'd have thought that a line like "I'm coming Nancy, if my skull holds out" could be so romantic?

By the way I like this movie much better than the big budget remake called "As Good As it Gets." Which, if my facts are straight, was made by the same people who own Lunatics. Coincidence???

And so I was inspired to take in Thou Shalt Not Kill...Except. I watched the first 20 minutes and had to take a breather from Brian Shultz's horrific acting, he should be drawn and quartered. He nearly brings down the whole production. But I stuck with it and it really won me over in spite of Styker's acting. I went into this film thinking I'd hate it but it was really entertaining. I didn't even recognize Sam Raimi until his second big scene and he looks like he's having the greatest time playing the grunting Manson. I'll have to check out the DVD version when I get a chance.

One last thing: previous to finding your website I had never seen a single episode of Xena. So much of your mail concerns that show that I thought I'd give it a try. According to the listings this was an episode called "Send in the Clones" , from which season I have no idea. All I can say is that it was complete excrement, an insulting mish-mash of xena fanaticism mixed with mumbo-jumbo science, and clumsily pasted together scenes from past episodes. I will never watch another episode as long as I live. Although I'm sure Ted and Bruce are just great in their episodes.

Thanks from Julie

Dear Julie:

Yes, I suppose "As Good as it Gets" and "Lunatics" are sort of similar. As for Brian Schulz, whom we found to replace Bruce, he did what he could. I'm sorry you don't like "Xena," but I didn't direct the episode you

mentioned.

Josh

Name: jamie
E-mail: jamiee_86@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

i am doing a school thing i was wounding what you get paid? how mush do you work in a week? what are some advantages and disadvantages about the job??than you

Dear Jamie:

Is this a 3rd grade school assignment? What do you care about film directors, you still need to learn to spell and form a sentence. I do make lots of mush in a week, though.

Josh

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

Josh,

What about "The Bad and the Beautiful" or "Sunset Blvd."? Those are films about filmmakers.

How do you feel about "The Player"? It's the only Robert Altman film I ever liked, but I guess that doesn't mean very much--everyone seems to think he's some kind of a genius. (I thought both "What Women Want" and "Short Cuts" were absolute pieces of cow dung)

Now a question I'm curious about...After you came to L.A. what was your first "real" movie bussiness job and how in the hell'd ya get the som bitch? Has there ever been a job you passed up that you wish you hadn't?

Have a helluva good one.

Sincerely,

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

I like "The Bad and the Beautiful" and "Sunset Blvd." both very much, but they're both 50 years old, too. For the past 10-15 years the young filmmakers trying to make it has become the standard cliché of the independent movie. "The Player" is all right, but I really didn't much care for it's plot, the writer wanting revenge and the executive mistakenly killing him. There's stuff in "Mistress" I liked and there's stuff in "Living in Oblivion" that I liked, too, but, for the most part, making movies is not a suitable subject for movies.

Regarding my first "real" job in the movie business, I don't really know what that is. I worked as a production assistant on a lot of shoots as a kid, both in Detroit and L.A., from 18 until I was in my early 30s, but I don't think that's what you're talking about. I suppose it was when Scott Spiegel and I were hired to rewrite "Hit List" for Bill Lustig in 1987, although we didn't end up getting credit. We did do three rewrites and it was made. Then Renaissance Pictures hired Scott and I to write a low-budget horror film for them, which we did, called "Dark Moon." Then we were hired to write "Ball Breaker," then I was hired to write and direct "Lunatics" in 1988. I think I've noted this before, but in the same office on Hollywood Blvd. at the same time, Sam and Rob were preparing "Darkman," John Woo was preparing "Hard Target," and I was preparing "Lunatics," and we were all bumping into each other waiting for our green lights.

Josh

Name: Mike
E-mail: mmanning@ix.netcom.com

Hi Josh,

Can you help? I'm a student at Cal Poly and I've got an assignment to write a couple of articles. They're due next week. The quarter is about over and I really should be getting these things done. However, today I'm going to hop on the ol' Honda and head up to Great Western Gliderport for a day of soaring.

What movie soundtrack would you recommend I listen to while soaring high above the San Gabriel Mountains?

Mike

Dear Mike:

For a trippy sort of experience, why not try Vangelis' score for "Blade Runner," which never fails to transport me elsewhere (though not into the movie for me). If you can get your grubby paws on "The Fantasy Film World of Bernard Herrmann," it has "Fahrenheit 451," "The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad," "The Day the Earth Stood Still" and "Journey to the Center of the Earth," which would certainly be fun to listening to while flying.

Josh

Name: clayton
E-mail: clayn1bb@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

What was the movie five easy pieces about?
thanx

Dear Clayton:

Go rent it, it's a very good film. Jack Nicholson, Karen Black and Billy Green Bush are all terrific. It's about a guy trying to figure out where he belongs.

Josh

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

hiya Josh!

Missed a few days visiting your site, and look at all the posts, some really good ones. How cool that Battle of the Big Tuna can be bought after all. I just had the pleasure of meeting Rob over the weekend at the convention, what a cool guy. I gave him a painting I did of him holding Lucy, called "Rob's Catch". (I'd post the URL for my Xena art, but knowing you have such good taste in art, I'm too nervous to lol).

I also re-read Stevie the Cat, after that nice post about that. Last month I lost my dog, whom I had the same feelings you expressed for Stevie. Animals have better character than humans, and personally I felt a deeper bond to him than I do with most bi-peds. His name was Joxer..I know, sounds terribly fannish, but it truly fit, he was a doberman who thought he was tough, but was really a big mushball. He was a great dog. I have found a new companion though, and I think it helps immensely. Have you thought about a cat that stays indoors? I don't live near a busy street, but just as bad, in Topanga Canyon, with coyotes everywhere. I don't know how some cats cheat death for years and years, but I agree, I'd be too nervous to chance it.

Anyway, enjoyed your latest offering, A Lesser Form. I enjoyed Gladiator while I was watching it, but it didn't stick with me. I adored Spartacus, and I will never tire of watching it (I had a dog named Spartacus once,too <g>). That movie is a feast, Gladiator is like a twinkie.

Take care!
Tam

Dear Tam:

I don't think it's right to keep a cat shut up inside, it makes them fat and lethargic. My family had an indoor cat and all it ever wanted to do was escape. I will not be anyone or anything's jailer.

Josh

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

Dear Josh,

I've been reading all of your "Short Stories." I love the comprehensibility of this site. Anyway, I was wondering if you like Shirley Jackson? Besides "The Lottery," which everyone knows, she wrote dozens of excellent short stories and a couple of novels. The tone of "A Spoon in the Sink," kind of ended Jackson-style, with the little twisty end. Very cool.

I tried to read "Cleveland Smith: Bounty Hunter," but I couldn't get past the first page. Sorry. It's a little too corny for me. While amusing, I just wasn't in the mood for something THAT silly. It's kind of like the Marx Brothers. On film, it works. Reading it, it seems silly. "Nome?" "Of course, I know him, he's my uncle." Ba-dum-dum. My heart's not in the right place for it, I guess.

I'm fond of your non-fiction right now. "Commando Mission" kicked ass. What adventures does the future hold? Only the Shadow knows...

--cindy

Dear Cindy:

It's possible you may never be in the mood for "Cleveland Smith," which is jokes just like that on every single page. Yes, I do like Shirley Jackson, she's written many short stories I have enjoyed, as well as "The Haunting of Hill House" which became the wonderful 1963 movie "The Haunting" (forget the remake). Well, I'm glad you're enjoying the short stories. Have you read "The Crazy Man" or "The Gospel According to Judas"?

Josh

Name: Eartha James
E-mail:

Dearest Josh,

Have you ever considered writing a film with more personal subject

matter? You have so many great experiences to pull from. I would really like the JOsh version of what it was like growing up in Michigan with a bunch of guys who all dreamed of becoming filmmakers; guys who eventually made their dreams a reality. I'm sure it has been a bittersweet journey, and a story worth telling.

Thanks,
Eartha

Dear Eartha:

I have a problem with films about people wanting to be filmmakers. I don't think it's good subject matter for movies. I caught a few minutes of some new movie on cable the other night about two guys sitting in a room writing a screenplay. I can't think of anything duller to watch, except possibly paint drying.

Josh

Name: Charles
E-mail: cscorder@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

What's your opinion of the films of John Sayles?

Charles

Dear Charles:

There's an intelligence behind them, but I don't really like any of his films. The one I like best, which he won't even discuss, is "Baby, It's You." I couldn't even sit through the last one, "Limbo."

Josh

Name: Paul K
E-mail: ppk126@aol.com

Josh,

Do you think that the salaries name actors now command are too high? Do you think writers should be paid more for their efforts on film? What's your view on the possessory credit debate between writers and directors?

Thanks,

Paul

Dear Paul:

No, I think people charge what they think they can get, that's how the free market system works. And yes, I think writers in general should be paid more. Regarding the possessory credit, my stance is that you must perform two of the three main jobs, being writing, producing and directing.

Josh

Name: Josh
E-mail: joshreed@yahoo.com

Josh,

What party did you and Steven Sears attend together? Who else was there? You seem like the kinda guy who would love to kick up his heels, why would you leave early? Are you not the party animal I'm imagining you to be?

Wishing you all the best,
Josh

Dear Josh:

Nope, I'm not the party animal I once was. This kind of shit befalls you in your 40s. It's a bummer, but that's life. The party was the "Xena"/Renaissance Pictures wrap party.

Josh

Name: Lucas
E-mail: snoogans@softhome.net

Dear Josh,

I read something recently about "Pearl Harbour"'s enormous budget (looks like a giant piece of crap no matter how much they put into it) and figured that maybe you could answer this, being the movie trivia buff that you are:

What's the most expensive movie ever made, proportionately? (ie taking inflation and such into account)

Cheers,
Lucas

Dear Lucas:

It's all how you want to look at it. Was a million dollars for "Intolerance" in 1918 more than the \$4-5 million for "Ben-Hur" in 1926, or whatever the heck it took to make "Gone With the Wind" in 1939 (\$12 million?), or the \$40 million it took to make "Cleopatra" in 1963, or the \$200 million to make "Titanic" in 1997? It's all relative.

Josh

Name: lilian mina
E-mail: liliehab@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

Where is 99-cent store in Atlanta?

Dear Lilian:

On corner. Near building.

Josh

Name: S.C.
E-mail: scornett@yahoo.com

Hey,

I was just curious about what you thought of the soundtracks of Danny Elfman, if you're at all familiar with them.

TSNKE,

-S.C.

Dear S.C.:

I liked his score for "Midnight Run," which was kind of a jazzy, rock thing. His orchestral scores, though, sort of blow. It's all big orchestration without a melody. His scores crash and bash and boom, but there's no tune. A good score always has a good melody, just like a good song. It takes days after seeing "The Godfather" to get Nino Rota's score out of your head, or Maurice Jarre's score for "Lawrence of Arabia."

Josh

Name: Steven Sears
E-mail: xxxx@xxxx

JOSH! We were supposed to hook up at the party, but you skittered off. Give me a shout.

Oh, and if I have to have a question... uhm... explain why there's a "Best Boy" and not a "Better Boy".

Steve

Dear Steve:

After three hours I must escape all hot, crowded places these days. I suppose if a Best Boy is really good then he becomes a Better Boy. Then, if he gets real fat, he becomes a Butter Boy, then, if he hates his job, he becomes a Bitter Boy.

Josh

Name: Kathleen Trujillo
E-mail: rncrow@mediaone.net

Dear Josh:

I chuckled all the way through your story of your experience as a patron of the 99 cent Store. It brought to mind one of my first purchases in that store. It was a metal spatula. The very first time I used it, I slid it under a frying egg to flip it and ended up with a metal rod in my hand and the flat part of the spatula under the egg where I had put it!

Dear Kathleen:

But it was only 99-cents, so you don't feel bad about it.

Josh

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

Dear Josh,

Whenever someone asks me "What's the best suspense film you've ever seen?" I always respond, "Henri-Georges Clouzot's 'The Wages of Fear.'" Invariably, the response I get is, "What?"

I am only mentioning this because I've just read your essay "A Lesser Form ." While I don't wholeheartedly agree that ONLY bad movies have been made in the last 25 years, a LARGE NUMBER of bad movies have. Since I've only been on this planet 28 years, I'd hate to think that none of my contemporaries have been able to pull off the amazing feat of good story, good acting, etc. etc. to make an actual 'good' movie.

One point you brought up that struck home was the concept that "if it didn't suck completely" you feel like you didn't get ripped off. Moviegoers today expect films to suck. That's the sad truth. And we're rarely proven wrong. Yes, scripts should be MORE complicated, not LESS.

"Duh," movies from the 60s and 70s were better. Why? Because the bottom line wasn't eyeballed. Because audiences weren't asked if they wanted to see 12-year-old Linda Blair masturbating with a crucifix. OF COURSE THEY WOULDN'T. That's not the point. So. Eliminate this whole "Test Market" scenario. Remove the concept of "bottom line" from the business of filmmaking. Or, shoot digital video. Make art. Stay broke at home. Be happy.

It's sad, my friends are all looking forward to "The Mummy 2," and "Pearl Harbor." They say, "I know they're going to suck, but WHAT ELSE IS THERE?" Damn. You'd think there'd be a million amazing movies competing for our brainspace in this day and age, with every busboy in L.A. having a script in his head. But why do they have those scripts in their head? Because they have burning stories to tell? Probably not.

What was your motivation for moving to L.A? Art? Money? Both? What is your motivation for staying there? I've been reading "Entertainment Weekly" (or, appropriately, "EW") and finding out that pre-strike Hollywood is picking up random actors from places like the "Survivor" TV show to star in films! Directors who helmed ONE film are now doing \$20 million pictures! What the hell? Why haven't you been called to help out with some directorial chores? It's a cryin' shame. ...Or, would you have done it?

--cindy

p.s. Do you know I've never seen an episode of "Xena?" I plan on watching "Soul Possession" as my first.

Dear Cindy:

"Wages of Fear" is a terrific film (as kids I traded Sam Raimi an original paperback copy of "Wages of Fear" for an original paperback of "The Asphalt Jungle"). I quite like Hitchcock's "Notorious." As far as more recent films go, both "Alien" and "Aliens" were both very suspenseful. Of course, neither is particularly recent anymore. As far as movies being better in the 60s and 70s and them not eyeing the bottom-line, Hollywood ALWAYS kept it's eye on the bottom-line. Many of those terrific pictures of that time, which were intelligent, made money because they were relatively cheap. "The Last Picture Show," "Five Easy Pieces," "The Last Detail," these are great movies that didn't cost very much to make. But there was still the hold-over concept from the earlier days that every studio should make at least a couple of honestly good pictures every year. That concept is gone.

"Midnight Cowboy," "Patton," "The Godfather," "The Godfather Part 2" are all big-budget A-pictures that are still intelligent and beautifully made.

Josh

Name: kim
E-mail: mavjet@aol.com

Greetings,

I am not sure how I stumbled on your site, but am glad I did. The choice experiences of 99 cent store is absolutely hilarious! Thanks for the laughs!

kim
Harlow art
www.paintedlady.com/kim/gallery

Dear Kim:

Glad you liked it. I enjoyed your drawings.

Josh

Name: Diana Hawkes
E-mail: sdhawkes@penn.com

Hi again Josh,

You probably didn't catch it, but with last week's new Xena episode airing, there is a promo advertising that there are only "5 more episodes" to the big finale. In it, they show 4 or 5 quick scenes from the next eps, and one is Xena doing a full frontal kick to Ares (with her OLD chakrum on her hip!) on what appears to be a dirt road in a forest.

This tiny bit of clue lets me know that you filmed a new "flashback" scene for SP. Kewl. Now, having seen that Kevin, both for the present day scenes in SP and his appearance in The Blue Room, shaved and lost a hell-uv-a lot of weight, I gotta ask;

Did the hair/make-up department finally get his fake goatee looking believable? (In the early days, it was soooo fake on screen- like glued shoe polished lint- before he grew the real thing.) And since it's set in season 3, he'll have to have the longer hair. Be honest, did you see the fake wig or extensions and cringe or did they do a good job this time around?

I personally think it would have been hysterical if you had filmed the scene with the camera catching an assistant adjusting the faux hair and then Kevin jumps into the scene like nobody caught that the primping wasn't off camera. Acknowledging to the audience that-- o.k., it's ultra fake, we know!

I see you're not laughing--come on! Its a comedy right?

How about another blind item to quell my revived anticipation for SP, so far "Goat Cheese Milkshake". How about a verb or action clue? *And don't be a smarty pants and just say "sword sparring".*

Dear Diana:

Kevin's hair and beard were not exactly what they should have been because he was still shooting a movie for Michael Hurst and we just got him for a couple of days during that shoot. His goatee was just a few days growth, then darkened in. As for Kevin losing weight, that guy couldn't be in any better shape than he's in, and always has been. And yes, SP is like a clip-show, except I shot all of the clips for it. Here's another clue, "Soul Man."

Josh

Name: Julie
E-mail: juliejhnsn7@aol.com

Hi Josh,

If you've seen Lynch's Lost Highway I'd be interested in knowing what your thoughts are. Personally I think you could take your Eyes Wide Shut review and substitute Lynch's name and film into it and not need to change a thing.

From, Julie

PS: I finally tracked down a copy of Lunatics and am waiting for it to arrive from Canada! If any other folks are looking for it the best prices I could find are at the zShops on Amazon.com. It's just a shame that the money doesn't go to you.

Dear Julie:

I haven't seen "Lost Highway." I personally think Mr. Lynch had completely shot his wad by "Blue Velvet," and everything since then has been worthless. Quirkiness for the sake of quirkiness, which drives me insane.

Josh

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

Dear Josh,

Hello. I've just had a lovely weekend with Bruce and Ted in Pasadena. I got to interview and photograph both of them. It was lovely. However, I could understand why you weren't there. I left before Lucy and Renee took the stage.

Regarding your question, "Are there any directors doing big-budget movies to fund smaller ones?" the answer is "Yes," and the director in question is Steven Soderbergh.

See the film "Schizopolis." It stars Soderbergh, his ex-wife, and a cast of their friends. It's fascinating, weird, "makes no sense," and is brilliant. There are no credits. He funded it by making "Out of Sight." This is why I love Soderbergh so much.

--cindy

p.s. I could never live in L.A. The traffic sucks. How do you do it?

Dear Cindy:

But he made "Erin Brockovich" and "Traffic," that's why I don't like him. Regarding the traffic (situation), I stay in Santa Monica if humanly possible.

Josh

Name: Lucas
E-mail: snoogans@softhome.net

Dear Josh,

Thanks for the info on the score to "Hammer"; I can't wait to hear it now.

I read somewhere that Mr. LoDuca used to be a jazz musician before he got into scoring, so I get the feeling he'd write a mighty fine jazz score.

Also, do you have an all-time favourite movie score and/or composer? (I realize I've got a bit of a one-track mind with these questions, but what the hell, I find this stuff interesting.)

Peace and such,
Lucas

Dear Lucas:

I find it interesting, too. My favorite composer is Bernard Herrmann. I also very much like: Elmer Bernstein, Jerry Goldsmith, Miklos Rosza, Jerry Fielding, Ennio Morricone, Alex North, Ernest Gold, Leonard Rosenman,

etc. I love movie music.

Josh

Name: XenaHerc
E-mail: XLWH@aol.com

Hi Josh.

I enjoyed watching "Battle of the Big Tuna".

I liked that you included Rob preparing for the fishing trip by exercising and then going over the tools of the trade; explaining the equipment and what it does. I thought Rob was doing a suntan lotion commercial when he held up the bottle of suntan lotion.

Showing preparation for the trip added something to the video than if you had just put them on the boat and shot it.

I enjoyed the scenery shots such as the islands you were near and the sun rising or setting.

Things I learned from the video –

You travel quite a distance, 200 miles out to sea, to fish.

A lot of the fishing was done at night. I always thought fishing was a daylight activity.

It can take 3 hours or more to pull in a fish. I thought that anglers threw out the line, waited for a bite, and pulled them in. Dennis struggled with his fish for 3 or more hours and then lost it. All he got were blisters and had to resort to wearing gloves the next night.

I also didn't know fish were that strong. They left the men huffing and puffing after long battles.

I felt sorry for Jane. She was down on her knees saying, "I don't have the strength." It turns out she had a shark on her line.

Then Rob who was fighting to land his own big tuna, had his line break and said, "Smile as you cry."

Dart seemed to be blessed on this trip. The fish were jumping at his feet. It's the biggest fish I ever caught...again."

I enjoyed seeing this video and even though I don't fish, I learned some things from it.

The only time I attempted to fish was when I visited my cousins on a farm in Missouri when I was a teenager. They took me to a pond, gave me a worm for the hook; I dropped the worm, screamed and ran back towards the car refusing to try fishing.

By the way, were the scenes of Rob demonstrating the equipment shot in someone's backyard or a park?

Well take care Josh.

XenaHerc

Dear XH:

You sure did watch it. The scenes of Rob practising were shot in a nearby park. As joggers would come by and see Rob with all his fishing equipment, many would say, "They're jumping over near those bushes." I shot Rob doing his suntan lotion commercial many different times until he finally got it right. Also, that front piece of him fighting a big fish and turning to the camera and introducing the show took 20 tries. I did enjoy doing it, though.

Josh

Name: Lucas
E-mail: snoogans@softhome.net

Dear Josh,

What does the score to "If I Had A Hammer" sound like? Does it incorporate variations on the songs used in the movie?

Have a good one,
Lucas

Dear Lucas:

No, it's a jazz score. Joe LoDuca's score sets the time period and emotional landscape perfectly without taking sides between the folkie girl and the rock & roll boy. It's a very bright, hip score.

Josh

Name: Mayra Lopez
E-mail: l_mayra@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Hello. I am Mayra Lopez. I am doing a senior project on a career. I want to be a film director. I need to interview two people that work in that field. I was wondering if you can help me?

The questions that I am going to ask are:

What are the educational requirements for that position?

What is the present supply and demand for workers in the field?

What are the supply and demand predictions for the future for workers in this field?

How do you get the first job or break in this career?

What is the average salary figure and fringe benefits?

How do you advance in this career?

What is the job like on a day-to-day basis?

If you could please send me an e-mail with the responses to the questions. I would really appreciate it.

Thanks
Mayra Lopez

Dear Mayra:

I don't care about your school assignment.

Josh

You may find answers to some of your questions in the [F.A.Q.](#)

-Shirley

Name: Joel Johnston
E-mail: LuxSoapCompany@webtv.net

Dear Josh:

Scientists attest: Skin grows older looking through the gradual loss of certain elements that Nature puts in skin to keep it younger looking. Gentle Lux Toilet Soap, so readily soluble, actually contains such precious elements, checks their loss from the skin! 9 of 10 screen stars use Lux Toilet Soap exclusively.

Dear Joel:

From "The Member of the Wedding" by Carson McCullers.

Frankie: Luxembourg, isn't it a beautiful name?

Bernice: It just puts me in mind of soapy water.

Josh

Name: carolyn

E-mail: clyndeens@pacifier.com

Dear Josh:

Damn you Josh Becker. I was emailed your essay about how much you love smoking and i actually started salivating. I quit a year ago and I went to the nearest AM/PM this morning to get a fix. God I'm weak. --C.D.

Dear Carolyn:

There's nothing like being a good influence on people. In my ever so humble opinion, it's better to smoke if you enjoy it then to not smoke and torture yourself.

Josh

Name: Diana Hawkes

E-mail: sdhawkes@penn.com

Dear Josh:

You, sir, are a paradox to me. lol Just when I decide to chalk some of your bristly attitudes to general curmudgeon-ness (o.k. that's not a word), I find something in your website here that makes me want to hug you. I just found and read "Stevie the cat".

Reading along and seeing the pics, I said to myself, "that looks an awful lot like the magnet MY cat wore for his door." Sure enough by the end of your story I find out, 'tis.

I adopted two sibling cats and one grew to be a graceful lady- charming to all who encounter her, and the other is a 20 lb. Lou Costello reincarnation. I love him for his clumsy and comical way as much as I do his sister for her grace.

I installed a simple cat door but encountered the exact same problem you did with the neighbor population of cats waltzing through my house. I had to, after returning from vacation, go on hands and knees with upholstery cleaner smelling every damn thing including the walls, searching for the "sprayed" spots. Fun.

So I got the magnet-collar door. One problem. It was a slightly smaller opening than the old one. Tarzan, the chunky one, first time through, yes-- got stuck. I watched as he slowly wiggled and strained to pull through all the pudge, like a seasoned fat ass opera singer putting on her girdle. From then on when I'd see him on his way out, with a tinge of guilt, I'd follow him to that door to watch the spectacle of him putting a very round peg of a body thru a square hole.

Do you own any pets now? May I recommend adopting two siblings from the same litter and enjoying them growing up together and interacting. It is priceless, kind of like watching two Joxers run around all day trouncing each other, and I dare say will give you some more to write about. When you admitted Stevie was at the time what you grew to love most in the world, I don't mind telling you I cried. (There's that "girl" thing again.)

I see also you collect quotes. Here a couple:

"I am always honored when a cat singles me out and stares at me longer than a moment, for any cat is of course the most beautiful woman in the room."

"God created the cat in order that man may caress the tiger." (sorry this is so long, clip it down if ya want.)

Dear Diana:

I've received nothing but praise today, my head is swelling. Help, it won't stop. Stevie was a great cat and I miss him all the time. I've decided to not to get another cat while living so close to a big street. Other cats handle it, but it makes me too nervous.

Josh

Name: Julie
E-mail: juliejhnsn7@aol.com

Josh,

Sorry didn't mean to bitch about the title, which really is a non-issue. Having beaten that horse dead, I can't imagine that this (WofFate) could be made for under at least a couple of million, with the helecopeter crashes and all. It would be a shame for it to never make it off paper because its a fun read. Have you ever pitched ideas like this or Buds to HBO? Seems like it might be a happy medium for you between films and TV since it offers more freedom than regular TV.

Enjoy your weekend,
julie

Dear Julie:

HBO is a pretty picky company, and not easy to get into. They only make a limited number of films and they treat them all as sort of big deals. There are no easy financing deals, but certainly not at a quality place like HBO. Nevertheless, I'm pleased you liked the script. I knew posting these scripts was a good idea. That script has sat in a drawer unread for 12 years.

Josh

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

Josh,

Would you ever hire out to direct a big budget stinker with hopes of being able to get a bigger name and therefore money to make one or two of your own scrips? Is it worth making a shit picture to get two good ones? Have you ever been offered a script like that?

Who's an actor that you think is closest to the likes of the great actors of yester year?

Lastly, ya kinda seem to be a music lover. Where do ya put an ole boy like Frank Zappa? Just curious on this one. My friend and I were listening to his stuff in the truck the other night and damn he's unique.

Have a good one.

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

There's no point wasting time wondering what would happen if I got a lot of money. No one's offering. As I've explained before, I'm not a whore because I'm working a poorly travelled side street with no street lights. And just as a note, do you know of any filmmakers that are working both sides of the street, so to speak, making high-budget films, then using the funds to make low-budget films? Regarding the actor question, I don't know. As for Frank Zappa, I used to love his stuff when I was a kid. I knew all the words to the white, live album with Flo & Eddie. "Just let me put a little more rancid Budwieser on my beard right now . . ."

Josh

Name: Carrie Lettieri
E-mail: mochaphine@voyager.net

Dear Josh:

I read your 'From the Pen' essay on the three-act story structure, and want

to thank you for the best explanation of plot I've read or heard. Thanks.

Carrie Lettieri

Dear Carrie:

My pleasure, that's why I wrote it. Now go write a good script.

Josh

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