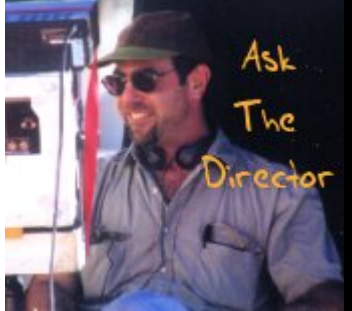


Josh Becker DGA

Directing From The Edge



Q & A Archive
Page 5

Name: Sven
E-mail: sven.forshell@swipnet.se

Dear Josh:

Possible to order running time?

Dear Sven:

Not anymore, at least not from me. It will be available on video tape and DVD from Anchor Bay Ent. in Oct.-Nov., here in America, that is.

Josh

Name: patty
E-mail: oat65@hotmail.com

Dear Josh,

Just a quick note; I've enjoyed your directing of the Xena episodes. Have you ever thought doing a letter box episode of Xena? Take care have a great day.

Peace & Light
patty

Dear Patty:

That's how they've been shot for the last season, in the 1:1.85 format, just like movies at the theater. This is being done for the slowly emerging HD-TV. However, even though they are using a widescreen format, the actual picture is framed within the TV frame (1:1.33) and the sides are left empty. A

decision of this nature has nothing to do with a menial little director like me. I shoot in whatever format I'm told to shoot in.

Josh

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

Dear Josh:

Back during your "Evil Dead" days - I gather that the film itself was shot fairly quickly, in 1979. The money that was raised presumably went for production costs - like paying and feeding you guys while you were making it, right? So once the film was shot - your part was over, I assume. But what went on for the producers (i.e. Raimi, Tapert + Campbell) over the next 2-3 years? Did it take them that much time to edit it, find distributors, etc? Or were they already working on their next project? I know you've talked about moonlighting at "day jobs" in the early stages of production for your own films - did they ever do that as well?

Dear August:

There was nothing quick about that shoot. It was scheduled to shoot in six weeks. We shot for eleven weeks in late 1979, early 1980, then we did a week of pick-up in Marshall, MI, then another week in Gladwin, MI, then probably five more weeks at Sam's house over the course of the next year. The "Evil Dead" shoot, when all added together, was probably as long as the "Titanic" shoot. I did most of the lighting on these reshoots. Then it probably took another year to shoot all of the special effects, which I assisted on -- blowing fake blood and green oatmeal through tubes. It took Sam, Bruce & Rob another two years to get the distribution deal. All the while all of us were working any jobs we could get, although mainly as production assistants on commercials.

Josh

Name: Chris
E-mail: wds911@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Your essay on structure has proven to be a breakthrough in my writing approach. You've cleared the air for me. Thanks.

:O)

Dear Chris:

My pleasure. That's why I wrote it. Good writing.

Josh

Name: Scott S.

E-mail:

Hello Josh:

I have a few questions:

(1) You always say that A CLOCKWORK ORANGE was Kubrick's last good film. I disagree. I think it was BARRY LYNDON (although I still haven't seen EYES WIDE SHUT yet). What do you have against BL? Do you think it's boring? I have the attention span of a five-year old and I think it's a great movie.

(2) For your upcoming film, "If I Had a Hammer," did you have to ask permission to use the song title as the title of your film? If so, did they make you pay for it? I only ask because I was planning on using a song title as the title for my first film. I sent a letter quite a while back asking for permission but haven't gotten a response yet.

(3) You say that transferring 16mm to video for editing is cheaper ONLY if you have access to a non-linear editing system. Why?

Regards,
Scott

Dear Scott:

1.) Ryan O'Neal is a weak lead with a poor accent and can't carry the picture. And at 183 minutes, I'd say it's solidly an hour too long. Marisa Berenson is a very weak female lead, too.

2.) Yes, you have to pay for the use of a song title as your film title, unless it's a public domain song, that is.

3.) If you have to rent an editing system, be it non-linear or video, it costs money. You can always cut 16mm film with rewinds and viewer for nothing or nearly nothing. That's how I cut a bunch of my films.

Josh

Name: MQBlank

E-mail: Starion106@aol.com

Hey Josh,

just finished reading your EWS review. Reminded me of your Thin Red Line review, which I also partially disagreed on. Is it possible that maybe you put a little too much emphasis on narrative structure? It just seems like you don't watch these films with an open mind. I'm not saying that I disagree with your comments. You're right that EWS is messy and at times dull. It really felt like a rough cut to me. Obviously many edits, shots, and even complete scenes did not work at all (Pollack/Cruise pool table scene a very obvious example). But like TTRL I still felt that there was a lot of redeeming value to this film. Intellectually it doesn't necessarily offer much, especially if you watch the film looking for some sort of deeper subtext beyond the conservative values Kubrick seemed to be pushing. What the film DID offer to me was atmosphere and some great images. You felt that there was no one 'great shot'. I agree. It was more the consistent look to the film. The dreamy Christmas imagery in the opening party scene, the contrasts of the blue and creamy white in the Harford's

apartment, and the menacing look to the entire Mask/orgy sequence (which has a near-great shot of Bill in the taxi pulling up to the gate at night). These images came together for me to make for a memorable film experience. In your way of looking at the film the orgy sequence was redundant after 30 seconds. In a narrative sense you're correct. However, Kubrick's long (or jerk-off) extenuation added several elements of involvement for me. As it went on, and on, a sort of brooding, menacing quality started to emerge. I felt I came to understand more and more about what Bill was going through as it progressed. A lot of that personal searching/contemplating would have been cut short in 'your' preferable version of the scene. I guess I'll leave it at that. I'd like to hear if you found any aspect of the film at all redeeming :) Seems like you hated everything about it. I'd suggest taking a second look. But maybe you're more confident in your opinion than I thought.

Dear MQBlank:

Look, if you had a good time, that's great. I'm entirely confident that my stated opinion represents my true feelings. I wouldn't sit through that picture again on a bet. As far as I'm concerned, pretty photography is a purchasable item and will get me through the first two or three minutes. And yes, I do put a lot of value on narrative structure; it's what makes a story compelling. Dullness is entirely unacceptable in my book. I'll live without the structure if there's actually something being said (like "My Dinner with Andre," say), but Kubrick has nothing to say. Out of sheer politeness, if one has nothing to say then one ought to be brief. Rambling on for almost 3 hours with nothing to say is an insulting waste of time.

Josh

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

Hiya Josh!

- How's the folk music film coming along?

- relating to what you've referred to in the past as that "incestuous" Detroit connection that you and a lot of your colleagues have, going back to Evil Dead or earlier, where did you guys first encounter John Cameron? I gather he worked on ED, has done some Xena/Hercules work, and does a lot with the Coens now? Is he one of those guys you grew up with? Any good stories about working with him? Also, your friend Jane (Coe? Goe?) who produced "Running Time" - had you worked with her before?

Also - I'm curious - has "The Phantom Menace" hype been what you expected? Is the film pretty much what you thought it would be? (I enjoyed it, but you're absolutely right - there's nothing original in there. At times it seems like a scene-by-scene remake of our favorite moments from the first three movies. At others it seems like an ad for the "Phantom Menace" thrill ride theme park, which I'm sure will turn up pretty soon!)

Thanks -
August

Dear August:

The folk thing, "If I Had a Hammer," comes along fine. I begin shooting in two weeks.

Regarding Mr. John Cameron, I (and Bruce) first met him in high school in 10th grade in Detroit. I first worked with John on my film, "The Final Round," in 1977, where he played a sports announcer (John has a big, radio/TV announcer voice --he's also six-foot-five). And actually, John did not work on "Evil Dead," although he did come down and visit the location in Tennessee while we were shooting. John was also the 1st assistant director/unit production manager on "Lunatics: A Love Story." John has a very acerbic wit. One day on the set of "Lunatics" the 1st assistant camera operator, Art Brown, came moping onto the set and sadly muttered that his girlfriend had dumped him. As we were about to shoot the first shot of the day, John stated, "Quiet on the set," pointed at the sound man and said, "Roll sound," pointed at Art and said, "She's never coming back," then pointed at the camera and said, "Roll camera." Art just sort of slumped against the side of the camera. I'm laughing now as I think of it.

As for Jane Goe, she is presently co-producing "If I Had a Hammer" with me. I've known Jane since she was the accountant on Sam's film, "Crimewave" in 1983. Jane was the production controller for Steven Spielberg for quite a while and did such rinky-dink little films as "Schindler's List" and "Jurassic Park."

And finally, regarding "Star Wars 4" (I call it that to A.) be honest, and B.) to annoy everyone), I never saw it. If they were giving away money I wouldn't have gone.

Josh

Name: Kelly Steglith
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Have you met Daisy Lawless, and if so, what is she like? Does she seem to resent the fact that her mother spends such long hours at work, rather than with her?

Thanx
Kelly

Dear Kelly:

I've known Daisy now for half of her life. I don't know what she resents or not, but it has to have it's own problems being the child of probably the most famous person in the country. Daisy is very bright, looks a lot like her Mum (as they say down there) and is quite a good artist for her age.

Josh

Name: cj
E-mail: none

Dear Josh:

I just saw ROPE the other day. It seemed at first that Hitch was going to pull off the real time concept without a flaw, but towards the end he did that annoying zoom for no damn reason into the peoples backs. What was the difference between the beginning and the middle to end part of ROPE that caused Hitch to go to SUCH a low?

Dear CJ:

I have huge and tremendous respect for Alfred Hitchcock, but I think "Rope" is one of his lesser films and failed experiment (which is a big reason why I made "Running Time"). Quite frankly, I think Hitch was bored with the whole damn thing by the time he shot the film. The thing Hitchcock really did best was his cutting and "Rope" hasn't got any, or very little. My biggest problem with the film is that there is no good reason to be shooting in real time since time is not an issue in the story. If the trunk with the body in it was going to automatically pop open at a certain point, then it would have made sense. That's why I did a heist story with a ticking clock element.

Josh

Name: Joakim Hammarström
E-mail: yocke@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I just happened to find this webpage when I was checking out Bruce Campbell on imdb, and this film seem to rock! Have you sold it to Sweden yet? That's where I live, or do I have to get the american DVD on import?

Dear Joakim:

I don't have an overseas deal as of yet, but I am working on it. The American release of "Running Time" is supposed to be in September.

Josh

Name: Scott Symons
E-mail: gsymon@blclinks.net

Dear Josh:

I am an aspiring filmmaker from the Flint area. I would like to know if there's any way you can help me contact Brian Schulz from "Thou Shalt Not Kill..Except." Although you didn't seem to be happy with his acting, I think he'd be great for a role in my film. I have a bad feeling you probably haven't spoken with him in 14 years, but is there any info you can give me to help me find him? I'd appreciate any help you can give me. (By the way, this site kicks booty [although I disagree with 75% of what you say]. Keep up the good work!)

Dear Scott:

You are absolutely correct in that I haven't spoken with Brian Schulz in about fourteen years. Sorry.

Josh

Name: Carlye Archibeque
E-mail: carchibeque@oscars.org

Hi Josh,

I bent your ear at the recent Anchor Bay thing. And after talking to you and going over film likes and dislikes, then reading over your favorite films, I have to ask...Apollo 13?

Dear Carlye:

You got a problem with "Apollo 13?" I think it's a very well-done picture that is completely succeeding at the story it's trying to tell. I think Hanks, Paxton, Bacon, Sinise and Ed Harris are all very good, as well as Ron Howard's direction. I've watched it four or five times and it really holds up, too.

Josh

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

Dear Josh:

Now that you're all set for your film to shoot within a month, how do you prepare yourself for the task? Its obviously more than a job, like a Xena ep., in this case. Its a personal project. I would think that this would add even more pressure to the whole thing. Even more so since its your money thats on the line. How do you mentally prepare for a shoot like this? Is every waking minute over the next couple weeks spent obsessing over the pre-production? Or do you try to relax and save up your energy for the shoot? There's no specific question here I guess. Just interested in what goes on in your mind as you get ready for such a major endeavor.

Dear MQBlank:

To paraphrase Burgess Meredith in "Rocky," "I eat lightning and crap thunder." I am completely obsessing. There are a million details and they'd all better be worked out by the time I shoot. I'm feeling like the ringmaster at the circus: when I point up in the air and say, "And now presenting the Flying Walandas . . ." there had a better be a wire for them to walk on and bunch of Flying Walandas ready to walk on the tightrope. Then, when I say, "And now the elephants . . ." there had better be a herd of elephants ready to come marching in. It's really just an issue of intense planning, then putting your faith in that planning. I've got a cast, crew, and all of the locations. Now it's time to shoot.

Josh

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

Dear Josh:

Hi. Recently I was able to watch two of the films you directed, 'Running Time' and 'Hercules In The Maze Of The Minotaur'. I thought both movies were terrific. I was wondering how much longer did 'Maze of the Minotaur' take to make compared to an average episode of Hercules and Xena.

Thank you,
Heath

Dear Heath:

"Minotaur" took three weeks to shoot. The other four Hercules TV movies had five weeks each, by the way. Herc and Xena episodes take seven days to shoot.

Josh

Name: Patrick Gough
E-mail: JGough8523@aol.com

Dear Josh:

My brother Joe and I are Michigan-bred(Clarkston/Waterford area) wanna be filmmakers/screenwriters and I was inspired by your tales of a local yocal made good. It gives me hope, really. Our work has been really well-accepted and we continue to plug away with our material (2 finished scripts, 5 specs) but the fund raising has been a continuously ball-busting procedure. I wanted to ask for your advice and/or covert methods you used in MI. to get cash. I was also wondering if I could possibly send you our 2 finished scripts and maybe... whenever you get a free minute, you could give 'em a look. I know I ask alot but if I don't ask I could be stuck in cold-ass Michigan for eternity. Thanks for your time and God bless.

Pat Gough/ Gough Bros. Films

Dear Pat:

Figuring out how to get a feature funded is what seperates the (metaphorical) boys from the men. The feature film that I begin shooting in 24 days is half financed by myself -- that's three years worth of Xena episodes -- another quarter financed by friends (out of sheer guilt) and the other quarter will be put on my nine credits cards, which I have been nurturing for years for just this purpose. Where there is a will there is a way, so to speak. Here's a thought to keep in mind -- 100 feet of 16mm film (2 1/2 minutes) is about \$30, plus another \$30 to process and another \$30 to either workprint or transfer to video. In and about \$100 for 100 feet. A feature film in 16mm is 3500-4000 feet. And you can always easily blow-up to 35mm later if you need to. Just shoot it a hunk at a time.

As to reading your scripts, thanks but no thanks. And by the way, aren't your 5 spec scripts finished? And what makes the other 2 non-spec?

Josh

Name: Iggy Kaufman

E-mail: bazy@email.com

Dear Josh:

On the Bruce official website it says you can order a copy of Running Time here. But I can't find where to buy it, if it is true, then I'm definitely interested, please email me back with the price and info if it is

Dear Iggy:

Sorry, you missed it. I was selling the tapes here for six months. I have since made a deal with Anchor Bay Ent. and it will legitimately be available on video and DVD in September.

Josh

Name: Deseret Frye
E-mail: def4@email.byu.edu

Dear Josh:

I am researching the career of a director. Could you please tell me some of the various duties that you perform and what type of schooling or degree you had?

Dear Deseret:

The director transfers the written word to the screen. They do this by breaking each scene down into it's smallest components, which are the individual shots. The director also blocks the actors movements, as well as giving the actors his interpretation of the characters and their motivations. I went to six colleges, never graduated and have no degree.

Josh

Name: Mr. Snrub
E-mail: fearloathingLV@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

You always bitch about how Hollywood sucks. Yet you liked L.A. Confidential? YOu actually liked a hollywood film?? Please explain this to me because I am very confused about your opinion.

Dear Mr. Snrub:

I enjoyed most of it the first time I saw it, although the big shootout at the end seemed like a mistake. When I watched it a second time on cable it didn't hold up very well and I was immediately tempted to remove it from the list, but didn't. But I do like the look, the period, and the tone.

Josh

Name: Drew
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

What do you think of J.R Bookwalter's films?

Dear Drew:

I've only seen "The Dead Next Door," which I actually appeared in and none of my footage turned out. My feeling is that J.R. is completely inept and hasn't got a clue what he's doing.

Josh

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

Dear Josh:

You've said that you really prefer to write your own scripts, and that you would not care to film anyone else's work, nor really to be involved with the Hollywood "system." (OK, OK - over simplification I know.) But I'm curious - suppose someone came to you with serious money already committed, a script in hand, maybe even a name actor committed. And they were to say "We'd like you to direct this film." (I'm assuming that's how Sam Raimi has gotten involved with some non-Renaissance films recently.) Would you take a look at it? Would you consider it? (No, I'n not going to send you a script - just curious!)

Second question: Since obviously you still work well with Renaissssance Pictures, would you ever approach them about producing another one of your films, or do you really prefer the complete indie route now?

Third question: Would you ever consider adapting something for the screen? A novel, for example, or a play, or even a non-fiction work? For that matter, are there any you've already thought about?

Dear August:

Answer #1: It's relatively easy for me to say I won't be involved in something that no one is offering me. Look, if someone offered me a lot of money to direct a script that I liked, that's one thing. The chances are, of course, that I wouldn't like the script and the money would be the entire incentive. Since this has never occurred to me I don't know how I would actually respond. It's easy to have integrity if it's never put to the test.

Answer #2: Renaissance Pictures does not produce movies anymore. Their last film was "Time Cop" in 1994. All the films that Sam has directed since then have been for other companies. So there would be no real point in asking.

Answer #3: There are many books and stories that I would like to see as movies, but since the first step in adapting something is purchasing the rights, this would be highly prohibitive to the tiny budgets I have on these indie features. Quite frankly, I'm happy to stick with my own stories and scripts.

Josh

Name: Kristin Ellis
E-mail: krissyellis@hotmail.com

Mr. Becker,

I am from a small town, and I know I have what it takes to act, but in my small town there is nowhere to go, but small theatres. Is there any way I could seriously audition through a tape for you. I can do anything!

Thanks for listening.

Kristin

P.S. People are always saying to me, "Kristin go for your dreams." So I am trying.

Dear Kristin:

I finished the casting for my new film, so you're too late, sorry. If you really want to be an actor then you'd best get your ass out to L.A. or N.Y. because that's where all the jobs are. Quite frankly, 90% of the work is in L.A. If you're not out here competing with all the other actors then you're not really trying. You can't do it from your small town and you're kidding yourself if you think you can.

Josh

Name: •^°v[Ryan Slavinski]v°^•
E-mail: iiiRaSiii@aol.com

Dear Josh:

I was wondering If you know of any film directors Who might need some suggestions on a Movie I have some very good ideas I would very much appreciate it if you would get in touch with me. I have been thinking about good ideas for movies for awhile now just never got around to telling anyone people always hold back on good things and let out bad but I just wanted to ask you if you could help me out i would very much like that

Sincerely:

Ryan A Slavinski
also known as RaS

Dear Ryan:

You might as well just accept that no one in Hollywood wants your movie ideas -- or mine, either -- and the only way you're ever going to get anyone to look at anything of yours is to write the scripts and

prove to everyone that you're a good screenwriter. Nobody buys treatments or outlines anymore, just completed scripts that will subsequently get completely re-written.

Josh

Name: Mark Morris
E-mail: morris@mainnet.com

Hi Josh,

I am a friend of Bruce Schermer who referred me to you. I recently shot a micro budget horror comedy, DIE HARD DRACULA, for a producer friend. He is thinking of distributing it over the net. Are you selling your films that way, or know someone who is? Any tips for starting up such a venture? How do people find out about your site, are there places to advertise? If you are doing distribution this way, what kind of response have you had.

Dear Mark:

I sold 200 copies of my film "Running Time" from this website. I ran an ad on IMDB.com (a very big website, now owned by Amazon.com), for \$1000, and I don't think it generated a single sale. I also sent out several hundred postcards to video stores across the country and that may gotten me 5-10 sales. Most sales came from fans: folks that had seen my first two films, or had seen the Xena episodes I had directed, or were Bruce Campbell/"Evil Dead" fans. Also keep in mind that it cost several thousand dollars to set-up the ability to take credit cards over the internet, over a thousand dollars for dupes and nearly a thousand for postage and mailers. Quite frankly, I don't think it was worth it.

Josh

Name: Avadon
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

What film guides would you recommend to a person who wants to study the history of films and filmmaking? What trade magazines do you subscribe to, or would you recommend?

Thanks,
R. Avadon

Dear Avadon:

If this is Richard, I think you're one hell of a great photographer. If not, you have a good name. As far as film guides go, I'm very partial to Leonard Maltin's Movie & Video Guide, which I think is by far the best of those kinds of books. For filmmaking I enjoyed Richard L. Bare's "The Film Director," as well as Steven D. Katz' "Film Directing Shot by Shot." Regarding film history, Peter Bogdanovich's newest book, "Who the Devil Made It," was terrific.

Josh

Name: Matt
E-mail: MinimumW.AOL.com

Dear Josh:

Josh, it seems unfortunate to me that I've never heard of you. I just stumbled across this sight while looking at some Evil Dead stuff. But from what I've read, you sound like a good film maker. How rare. My girlfriend and I are both writers and aspiring film makers. But some of the content of your responses seems rather discouraging. However, we will not forfeit our dreams. It is horrible to think that those who try to create should be stifled at every turn by those who have no imagination, and only hope to profit from those who do.

I'm struggling to think of an appropriate question to ask you in light of these recent doubts. The only question that comes to mind is whether or not it is worth it to "suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them." I've never been a fan of Shakespeare. I think iambic pentameter kills acting, but that is just my own bias. In any event, is it unreasonable to think that two intelligent and creative youths with no experience, no money, and nothing more than their wits can create a worthwhile film together? If so, it seems far too much for a reasonable minded individual to stomach. I wish, as silly as it seems that we were friends, and could discuss such matters in an open dialogue. Honestly, I don't know if or when I will return to this sight to find your answer. I seldom use the internet. But perhaps I will have the opportunity again soon. And regardless, it might be worthwhile to post for your other fans and admirers. Thank you for your time. And I hope to familiarize myself with your work.

Sincerely,
Matthew S.

Dear Matt:

My favorite quote these days is also from Shakespeare: "Be bold and mighty forces will come to your aid." You ask, is it worth it to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune? What else have you got to do? You can live a nice, quiet life and make no noise or trouble for anyone, then die without leaving a trace; or you can try for something more. Let's face facts, shall we? They make movies in every country in the world--you don't need Hollywood. You do need some money, but that can be found in a lot of places, all of which are easier to deal with than Hollywood. If you and your girlfriend have the drive and ambition to get a movie made, then you will. If you proceed with the idea that someone in power must bestow a film on you, then you'll probably never make one. Be bold, what have you got to lose?

P.S. Write to me personally anytime you'd like.

Josh

Name: Matt
E-mail: bdc75@hotmail.com

Hey Josh,

I'm eagerly awaiting the DVD release of your movie Running Time. Now you announced your deal with Anchor Bay awhile ago, so what's the current status of this DVD. Possible Release Date? Special Features? Is Bruce on the Audio Commentary?

Best,
Matt

Dear Matt:

September or October is the word I have. Bruce and I will both be on the commentary track, which we record the week after next. We're both doing "Thou Shalt Not Kill . . .Except" the same day.

Josh

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

Hey Josh,

I know this might be a better question for Sam but I figured I'd ask you anyway. Have you seen Blair Witch? My impression after seeing it a couple days ago is that its an obvious, gimmicky attempt to make an Evil Dead for the 90's. There's alot of hype on this film, and after seeing it I'd say that its 'mostly' undeserved. Basically the deal is that the filmmakers came up with this great concept of a pseudo-docu-horror film. But they (not surprisingly due to their inexperience) screwed it up in execution. The narrator/actress is horribly annoying and fake, and really the film ends up being totally a setup for the last 5 minutes. In a more experienced director's hands (yours, Sam's) this interesting concept could have truly made a great little film. It seems to me that there are alot of young directors rushing out there thinking they can make good, professional movies with little or no experience and/or film background. Really a shame. I think you should still check out this film though, definitely has some interesting aspects to it.

For example, it disproves your earlier comment that film is always better to use than video. In this case the visual quality of video actually enhances the audience experience and 'drama' (if you can call it that). So anyway, comments on the film? Or was this all pointless since you haven't seen it?

Jim Eagan

Dear Jim:

No, I haven't seen it, nor will I. I pretty much stopped going to the movies several years ago and that certainly won't get me started again. What you're calling a "great concept" sound like a total rip-off of part of "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer." Personally, I think the idea of a fake documentary at this point is a lousy, tired, unoriginal concept that nothing can be done with. This certainly does not disprove my statement that film looks better than video. However, if it's supposed to be on video than that is an obviously appropriate choice, but it doesn't make it better looking or more visually interesting.

Josh

Name: maeon
E-mail: maeonx@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Hey, I'm just interested in any advice you could give me on writing short (500 word) pitches. I'm currently writing my first screenplay, and the whole selling thing is still a big mystery.

Thanks
maeon

Dear Maeon:

Obviously spelling is something of a mystery to you as well. My feeling, after farting around this dumbass business for 20 years, is that scripts do not get sold or made based on pitches--that is, unless you have an in with a top executive. All of the low-end execs, the kind that most of us would end up pitching to, do not have the power to say yes or greenlight anything. Their entire job is to tell you no, and to make themselves feel powerful they will string you along for three or four months before saying no. Having pitched every studio in town, I have never written out my pitch. I simply tell the story and try to keep it short. Nevertheless, most film execs are assholes and won't give you five uninterrupted minutes. I actually had one stupid disgusting shithead of an exec take off his shoes and socks and begin cleaning the fuzzballs from between his toes while I pitched. I think it's a complete waste of time, but good luck to you.

Josh

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

Dear Josh:

Coupla quickies:

- the Raimi club that you chatted with a few months back is now going to line up a chat with Campbell Cooley - the guy whom Renee drooled on in "In Sickness and in Hell." Any good stories about him you'd like to share?

- speaking of chats, Ted Raimi just did one via Yahoo/TV Guide. So of course I had to ask him about you. He said the same thing you said about him - that you were very funny! He also commented very favorably on how prepared you are on the set (something about how you would have 20 answers as far as what a character should do) and that of course your knowledge of film was amazing!

- which brings me to this question? Ever see "Kind Hearts and Coronets?" Any comments on it, on that wacky-but-dark-but-stylish style of comedy? Or on Alec Guinness? I see a lot of similarities between that film and some your work! (I think you should re-make it with Bruce, Ted, and Jeremy!)

Dear August:

I only worked with Campbell Cooley for a couple of days. He did his job so well and effortlessly that there really aren't any amusing tales to tell. Tell him I say hi.

Regarding "Kind Hearts and Coronets," I saw it once 25 years ago and it went in one ear and out the other. It seemed like one of the less impressive comedies to come out of Ealing Studios at that time. I am a big fan of "The Lavender Hill Mob," which I think is hilarious. I also quite like "The Man in the White Suit" and "All at Sea." As far as remakes go, I don't like them and I will do my best to never be involved with one if I can help it.

Josh

Name: Eloi
E-mail:

Josh,

What do you think of Pal's direction in "The Time Machine"? Do you think he did justice to H.G Wells' book? What would you do differently?

Eloi

Dear Eloi:

A). If you run into Weena, give her my web address, and B.) I think George Pal did a geat job with "The Time Machine." I think he completely did justice to Wells' book. I particularly like the use of the dress shop across the way to show time going by. Also, the rotting Moorlock is one the really great, simple special effects. I also think that Rod Taylor and Yvette Mimieux are both very well-cast. I also quite like George Pal's production (with Byron Haskin directing) of "War of the Worlds." These films were made back in the days when SF films did not have to be so painfully stupid that anyone over the age of nine couldn't watch them. These films were made for both kids and adults.

Josh

Name: Divine@aol.com
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

What do you think about John Waters' work? Have you ever seen "Pink Flamingos"? Keep up the great work, hun.

Hugs and Kisses,
Divine

Dear Divine:

I like "Pink Flamingos" and "Female Trouble" quite a lot. Sadly, Mr. Waters peaked early, but no one has since come close to reaching his level of depraved fun. I particularly enjoy when, in "Pink Flamingos," the postman delivers a box (with a turd in it) to Divine in her trailer and she yells, "But we don't even have a fucking address!" Or in "Female Trouble" when Dawn Davenport asks the audience,

"Who wants to die for art?" a guy eagerly raises his hand and she shoots him.

Josh

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

Hey Josh.

A couple of questions. First of all, what do you do if you are hired to direct something and you find that the script is crap? What steps can you take to try and change things to make it a bit better.

Second, do you feel that there is only so much a director can do if the script they are working with isn't very good? The reason I'm asking, and I'll use Xena as an example since I'm a fan and you've been there, is I know there many directors who've done several episodes. I've seen several episodes from a certain director that I've loved while other's I disliked. For example I loved "Blind Faith" and "Femme, Fins, and Gems" which you directed but I really couldn't stand "For Him The Bell Tolls." Now don't worry, I'm not critisizing you, but it was the story for "FHTBT" I didn't like. I don't care for the Joxer character and I'n not too crazy for Lucy-lite episodes(I know it couldn't be helped here), but the point is it seems no matter how you or anyone else directed this episode I wouldn't have liked it because the story just didn't fit my tastes. So what i'm saying is, is it fair to say there is only so much a director can do with the story they have to present? After all, it doesn't matter how good of a job the director does, if a fan doesn't like the storyline, then they won't like it.

One final question, do you feel it is a necessity for anyone in the entertainment business to take an attitude where they don't take the fans too seriously? I was over at the Xena netforum not too long ago and found a post where someone was taking shots at you. This was obviously a disgruntled fan who said some very rude things because of the "Fins, Femme's, and Gem's" script and considered you to be homophobic because of some changes; note I don't share this opinion. Don't feel bad though; there are much worse things said there about Rob Tapert and you even find negative things said about Ted, Lucy, Renee, etc. Is it necessary to just say that these things come with the territory and not take it seriously.

Thanks.
Tony

Dear Tony:

The chances are these days that whatever you get hired to direct the script will be crap--most writing for TV and movies stink. In most cases, you take what you're given and go do what you can with it. Most directors are not writers and make no attempt at any rewriting, nor would they be allowed to. I, on the other hand, have a bit more latitude in that I am friends with Rob Tapert. On some other show I wouldn't even consider making the changes that I do on "Xena."

The old expression goes, "If it ain't on the page, it ain't on the stage," meaning the show will never be any better than the script. If you don't like episodes without Lucy--and neither do I--it doesn't really matter who directs, Lucy still isn't in it.

And as a little note, don't feel apologetic about not liking something I've done. If you feel like you want to criticize something of mine, go ahead. I'm critical of most everything all the time.

Speaking of being critical, I don't give a shit what any fans say about me. I don't do what I do to please fans. If they like what I do, great; if not, fuck 'em.

Josh

Name: Brian Stavig
E-mail: BriSta@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Remember me at the writers guild seminar- I had the screenplay about my life with a traumatic brain injury? Should I do it as an independent film? How should I start?

Dear Brian:

I remember you. If you've already got the script, then you have to get the money. Once you have the money, check back.

Josh

Name: Drew
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

What do you think about the low budget filmmakers that shoot on video?

Dear Drew:

You do whatever you've got to do to get a movie made. I just read, however, that it cost \$58,000 for some filmmakers to get their film that they shot digitally back onto 35mm. That's a lot of money. considering they spent that same amount shooting the picture. My film "Running Time" was cheaper, shot on film, and, I have no doubt, looks 100% better. Never forget that this is a visual medium. So far, both video and digital don't look anywhere near as good as film, even 16mm. As soon as digital or video resolution get anywhere close to film they will begin shooting the sit-coms with it. On "ER" they shot an episode on video as though it were being covered by a TV crew. Utilizing the same set and lighting, we got to see what the difference between, I would just guess it was Beta-Cam, and 35mm film. The difference is the world. Film is rich, has depth and is enjoyable to look at; video (and digital) is flat and somewhat offensive to look at. I have no doubt that it will get better. Nevertheless, at this point in time, film is still much better looking.

Josh

Name: Bill
E-mail: willywonka64

Dear Josh:

I'm new to the xenaverse and I've been reading some posts over at the Studios USA netforum that bash repeatedly Rob Tapert. I read on your web page (I think in the evil dead article) that you know him. What's he really like?

Dear Bill:

What can one say about someone they've known for 25 years? What I find most ingratiating about Rob is that, given he's a bigshot TV producer, if David Kelly and Steven Bocchco were standing on one side of the room discussing the future of TV and a toothless Canadian fisherman holding a flopping Walleye was on the other side, Rob would eagerly go speak to the fisherman wanting to know where the fish were biting, then spend an hour discussing lures.

Josh

Name: Griff
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

Do you like Sam Fuller? If you do, what's your favorite film of his, and why?

Thanks,
Griff

Dear Griff:

I like a number of his films, but I don't really love any of them. I'm fond of: "Fixed Bayonets," "Pick-Up on South Street" and "The Baron of Arizona." I went to Fuller's memorial at the DGA last year and Robert Stack told a funny story. He came up to Fuller and said he had trouble with one of his lines. Fuller responded, "Talk to the director." Stack said, "But you're the director." "Then talk to the producer." Stack said, "But you're the producer, too." Fuller replied, "Then I guess you're fucked."

Josh

Name: Amber
E-mail: warriorbabe79@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Hi there, I just wanted to tell you that I just love your work on "Xena". I think that you are one of the best directors for the show, well next to Renee, she is pretty good too. Anyway, I was wondering if you are going to be directing any of the season five episodes.

Thanks Your The Best!!
Amber

Dear Amber:

I certainly hope so.

Josh

Name: chris
E-mail: chriscry@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

josh, is there a sound track for strykers war if yes where can i get it and if no where can i get it

Dear Chris:

You can't get it. Nor Joe LoDuca's scores from any of my films. It's too bad, too, because they're damn good scores. Oh well.

Josh

Name: Drew
E-mail: SuperDrew123@webtv.com

Dear Josh:

Can you save money if you transferred film to video and then edited on this format? Also, can 35mm be transferred straight from the negative?

Thanks.

Dear Drew:

That's how just about everything you see now is done, shot on film, transfered to video (from the negative), then cut digitally. That's how we cut Herc and Xena, that's how I cut "Running Time." It's only cheaper if you have access to a non-linear editing system and someone who knows how to use it. Cutting on film is still the cheapest method, but it's complicated.

Josh

Name: Drew
E-mail: SuperDrew123@webtv.com

Dear Josh:

What kind of filmstock was Evil Dead filmed on?

Thanks.

Dear Drew:

I'm sure it's some 16mm Kodak stock that no longer exists, but it wasn't very fast film. No more than 200 ASA, probably more like 125 ASA. Given that, it sure looks lousy. The 35mm blow-up didn't help much, either.

Josh

Name: Maria Cruz
E-mail: maria_cruz7@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I absolutely loved the Xena episode you directed called "If the Shoe Fits". Could you please tell all of us xenites out here what Lucy Lawless is like in real life? Do you have any funny 'behind-the-scenes' stories that you could share with us?

Thanks!
Maria Cruz

Dear Maria:

Lucy is a pleasant, funny, very bright person that's a complete pleasure to work with. I can't think of any behind-the-scenes stories to tell. One thing she does in that episode, that she thought up, that slaughters me everytime I see it is in Aphrodite's version of Tyrella, when Lucy is watching her mom with four beefy studs with her tongue hanging out and says, "I'm dry as a lizard." I guess a funny behind-the-scenes story with Lucy is when I first met her in 1993 when we were making "Hercules and the Amazon Women." Lucy plays the second-in-command amazon to Roma Downey of "Touched by an Angel." Anyway, I was the 2nd unit director. The first time I saw Lucy I just thought she was incredible and I began following her around the set--pretty obviously, too. And I kept saying to her in a Cuban accent, "Lucy, you got some 'splainin' to do." After two days of this she finally came up to me and said, "That's from the 'I Love Lucy' show, right?" I nodded and smiled. She went on, "Oh, we never got that down here in New Zealand." It seemed like a good time to stop imitating Ricky Ricardo.

Josh

Name: Maria Monte de Rey
E-mail: bluebeach10@Hotmail.com

Hi Mr Becker,

Im deaf, I do speak very well. Im learning to write the script something to do with hearing impaired among with hearing people on tv show or movie. What spec script look like? is it long or short? I would

be appreciate your comments. Thank you

Dear Maria:

I have five scripts posted on this site. Download "Cycles," which I wrote as a spec script and sold for \$68,000. A feature script is generally between 100-130 pages.

Josh

Name: K. Black
E-mail: kibble33@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I am in Houston and am finding the theatre/film/video community very closed. I haven't gone to film school, just a B.A. in French and Theatre. I am not meeting the right people or taking the correct courses to learn about film & video. I love directing theatre and have a hard enough time figuring out the community in that genre. My question: Do you have any ideas on a "self-study" method of learning to become a film director? I cannot do anything else. Hence, I am unemployed. :) Any response will be appreciated.

Dear K.:

There are three things you can do: watch movies (and pay attention), read books about it, and make your own films. Two books that I enjoyed were "The Film Director" by Richard L. Bare and "Film Directing Shot by Shot" by Steven Katz. Since there are innumerable reasons why you would be better off not going for this, if you accept any one of them then you're not a film director. I seem to quote this a lot, but Virgil said, "They are able because they think they are able." I will also now include Shakespeare's advice, "Be bold and mighty forces will come to your aid."

Josh

Name: Sebastian
E-mail: sebsztuk@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I'm not sure if this movie is in your all time favorite movie list yet, or not, but I think you absolutely NEED to see the classic "Zardoz". Sean Connery brilliantly portrays Zed the "Exterminator", If anything falls short of the mark in this movie it is the costumes, which aren't extravagant enough for my tastes. Regardless the nudity is itty, and the plot makes you think. I want to hear your opinion on this masterpiece. How would you have done things differently? Can this movie be any better?!

Love,
Seabass

Dear Seabass:

Look, you like "Zardoz," God bless you. I saw it when it came out, and haven't seen it since, and it seemed to my 17 year old mind to be a complete piece of crap. My problems with most SF movies is that I was a SF literature fan for about ten years and something like "Zardoz" seems like SF writing from 1931. It's unsophisticated, simple-minded stuff. The big pay-off is "Wizard of Oz." I'm sorry, but that's stupid.

Josh

Name: Red River
E-mail:

Josh,

Who do you think I am? Give some initials and I'll tell you if you are correct. Okay, here's my question: If you could choose just one film that embodied the sum total of what you think is great filmmaking, what would it be, and why?

Best,
R.R.
or you can just
call me Red

Dear Red:

Perhaps because you won't give your e-mail address, it seems like you're hiding your identity. Anyway, I suppose "Citizen Kane." It seems like the last time someone really pushed the medium to its limits.

Josh

Name: M. Morningstar
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

Glad you liked the book. My question is: where do you buy stock news footage from? And, how much does it cost?

Thanks,
Marjorie

Dear Marjorie:

If you purchase a copy of the "L.A. 411" book or "The Hollywood Flip Book" (which I just bought), they have a complete listings of stock footage houses. All of the TV networks sell stock news footage, too. It's sold by the second and it depends on what rights you want, U.S. video, worldwide video, U.S. TV,

worldwide TV, theatrical, etc. It's not cheap no matter what rights you want, but I don't recall the rates off hand.

Josh

Name: Jeff
E-mail: jph2btff@aol.com

Mr. Becker,

I was just wondering if, as of June 4, if there was any copies of "Running Time" left. I'm a big fan of both yourself and Bruce Campbell and I would hate to find out that I waited too long to order the film. Thank you.

Dear Jeff:

The notice on the front page says there are 10 tapes left; there's 10 tapes left.

Josh

Name: Red River
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

When you first left Michigan for Hollywood, what was your ultimate goal? What did you want to achieve? And, what do you think your weakest link with regards to filmmaking is? What area would you most like to improve?

Best,
Red

Dear Red:

Are you someone I know hiding behind anonymity? Let's take this one question at a time: My goal when I left Michigan for Hollywood was to be a great writer/director. I wanted to achieve fame and fortune, as well as the respect of my peers -- I ended up as a cashier in a delicatessen. My weakest link to filmmaking, at least the Hollywood variety, is my inability and complete disinterest in schmoozing. I would most like to improve my skills at getting a good distribution deal.

Josh

Name: Rocky
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

If you weren't a filmmaker, what other profession would you want to be involved in? What are your other passions?

Rocky

Dear Rocky:

That's an interesting question and I appreciate interesting questions. I think I would be a novelist or a playwright. If I could stay in the film business, but not be a director or a writer, I'd be a cinematographer. If I didn't smoke like a chimney, I fantasize about being a cruiserweight boxer, although, having had TMJ problems my whole life, I probably have a glass jaw. I suppose I could always open a hotline and answer movie trivia questions.

Josh

Name: Red River

E-mail:

Hi Josh,

I would like to know what steps you took to acquire an agent at ICM when you were just starting out?

Thanks,

RR

Dear Red River:

I hooked up with Jonathan Haze, star of the original "Little Shop of Horrors," who was interested in getting "Thou Shalt Not Kill . . . Except" made. He connected me up with the agent at ICM. This guy was exactly the Martin Short character in "The Big Picture," "I don't know you, I don't know your work, but you're a genius." Of course, after the first meeting he never did shit and basically wasted 6 months of my life.

Josh

Name: Red River

E-mail:

Hi Josh,

I know that Bruce Campbell is writing a book about his experiences in Hollywood; have you ever thought about writing a book like, "Rebel Without a Crew" detailing your experiences?

Thanks,

RR

Dear Red River:

If no one has heard of you no one wants your book. People have heard of Bruce and Robert Rodriguez, they have not heard of me.

Josh

Name: Richmond Hargreaves
E-mail: Tarologist@Yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

I was wondering about the movie 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?' I am unsure what the relevance of Martha pretending that her son has died? Also the game that George and Martha are playing, is it really a game, or are they really cheating on each other.

Dear Richmond:

I simply consider it an acting piece for four good actors. Perhaps you should try getting in touch with the playwright, Edward Albee.

Josh

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

Hi Josh,

How much does it cost to make a movie? Actually, I'm curious about average minimums for the type of movies you make. How much does it cost to make a direct to video movie? Can you recommend a couple of good books on the subject?

Thanks.
Mike

Dear Mike:

My film "Running Time" cost \$120,000, "Titanic" cost \$200 million, all other films fall somewhere between there. You could even go cheaper than "RT," but would be difficult to shoot on film. A friend of mine is making a severely low-budget feature right now that he's mainly shooting silent with his Bolex and I bet he ultimately doesn't spend \$100,000, maybe not even \$50,000. There's all kinds of books on low-budget filmmaking and film budgeting, but I have no suggestions since I don't read them.

Josh

Name: Sebastian Stzuk
E-mail: sebsztuk@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I just wanted to say I am the biggest fan, not of your directing, though it is good, and definitely not of your pathetic writing (thou shalt not kill except) but of your bitching. You are the supreme belly-acher. You should start a country band. I have never heard better pissing or moaning! Abandon the rest of your psuedo talents immediately and take up a full time job complaining. People could just come to you house and you could bitch about any topic. Never before have a seen such a pissed of person with so many views. Any newspaper would take you on in a second. You could have your own regular column. It could be like dear Abby and you would take people's letters and write how insignifigant their problems are. Or, just have a little editorial and write about how fucking shitty the world and especially entertainment is. I'd definately subscribe.

Dear Sebastian:

Nearly 11,000 hits can't be wrong.

Josh

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

Hey Josh.

I just read what you wrote about some of the qualities it takes to be a director. I know you may not have a definate answer to this question but I was just looking for your opinion. As you may know Renee O'Connor who you've directed many times recently moved behind the camera on Xena and the episode was on just last week.

I know this was her first effort and she jumped right into the fire so to speak doing a Xena, but you've worked with her and know her work ethic and how she handles things on set. Do you feel she has the qualities to be a good director if she focuses her work their later on. Also did you see the episode and if so how do you think she did in her first effort. I'm not sure how to judge directing, but I would have to say in my opinion she did a heck of a job given the script she had to work with especially given it was her first time.

Thanks.
Tony

Dear Tony:

I didn't see her episode and there's no way I could possibly judge without seeing it. Renee's a wonderful, bright person, but those aren't necessarily prerequisites for being a good director. Many good directors have been complete failures as human beings. Being nice may not produce the result your looking for. Luckily for me, I can be a total prick anytime I want. I've never seen Renee be

anything but sweet to everybody. However, my grandmother used to say, "You get more flies with honey than with vinegar."

Josh

Name: Dufus

E-mail:

Josh,

When are you going to film a new "Xena" episode?

D.

Dear Dufus:

Sadly, I just turned one down because it conflicted with the film I'm about to make. I hope to do another one ASAP, but it may very well not be this year.

Josh

Name: Raymond

E-mail:

Hi Josh,

What is your screenwriting process? Does a story just come to you and then you write it down? Or, are you the kind of person who writes on a regular schedule; like a couple of hours every day? When you begin writing a script, do you use a formal outline? Do you use note cards? Do you usually have a three-act structure in mind? Do you listen to music when you write? If you do, what kind? Are there any new screenwriters in the Indie scene that you really like?

Thanks so much guy,

cool site!

Ray

Dear Ray:

I am a writer so I write all the time: stories, essays, screenplays, answers to questions like this. I sit and stare into space thinking about stories all the time, which is where they usually come from, although hot showers are a good place, too. I'm also a fan of marijuana, which I find greases the imagination wheels, as does coffee and cigarettes (alcohol, cocaine and all other drugs have never been of any help to me so I don't like them). I outline everything, and until I know what my three acts are I don't start the actual writing. I listen to KUSC, the classical station, most of the day. I do switch over to jazz at some point most days. I generally switch to rock & roll in the late afternoon as a pick-me-up. And no, there are no indie screenwriters that I admire. In fact, are there any indie screenwriters? Most low-budget films are written by the director, most seemingly as an afterthought.

Josh

Name: Alice
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

How come you've never gotten married? Do you have a serious girlfriend?

Your fan,
Alice

Dear Alice:

I'm not entirely sure. Probably because I have been so obsessed with making movies. I haven't had a serious girlfriend in ten years. Some guys are just bachelors, I suppose.

Josh

Name: M. Morningstar
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Do you think being in Hollywood has tainted your view of filmmaking? If you could go back and do it all over again (your career, that is) what would you change? And, what have you wanted to achieve in your career that you haven't yet? Lastly, do you consider yourself successful?

Thanks,
Marjorie

P.S. Oh yeah, who is your favorite screenwriter and why?

Dear Marjorie (I enjoyed Wouk's book, by the way):

22 years, on and off, in Hollywood has tainted my view of everything. There just can't be a bigger, more poorly-run business in the world. On the standard \$60 million Hollywood film, \$50 million is completely wasted. If you grabbed every executive at every studio and put guns to their heads they couldn't come up with one decent idea between them.

The last thing on Earth I'd want to do is go back and live my life again. Between the ages of 5 and 35, life was a complete misery. It's only started to get good in the past five years. Therefore, I wouldn't change anything because I'm happy where I am.

In regard to achieving things I have yet to achieve, I have quite a few scripts that I'd still like to shoot. Each of these independent features is such an ordeal, and none of them has really made any profit yet, so I never know if I'll ever make another one. I'd love to achieve a good solid source of financing

and distribution, with no knuckle-headed strings attached, but that's probably just a dream.

I am a success because I make the films I want to make. Thank God for "Xena" so that I actually make a living.

I don't really have a favorite screenwriter. I admire: Paddy Cayefsky, Dudley Nichols, Horton Foote, William Inge (who was mainly a playwright, but his plays made terrific movies), Michael Wilson, Carl Foreman, Robert Bolt, Preston Sturges, Billy Wilder, Joseph L. Mankiewicz (and his brother, Herman), John Huston, Edward and Edna Anhalt, William Goldman, Irving Ravetch and Harriet Frank, Jr., Daniel Taradash, Dalton Trumbo, Robert Towne, Howard Koch.

Josh

Name: John Robie

E-mail:

Dearest Josh:

I want to know what qualities you think a good director should have? More specifically, what do you think it is that makes a director great? Lastly, what kind of training would you recommend to a person who wants to be a director? Film School? Internships?

Thanks,
John

Dear John:

The main quality, I believe, is taste. What actually is good? To achieve this I believe that you must have a critical facility, the ability to say, "I like this and here's why" or "I don't like this and here's why." Being a director is making decisions and imposing your point of view anywhere and everywhere all over the film. Since theoretically every department is carrying out my wishes, now, what the hell am I asking for? Is it rational or is it stupid? To have a critical facility, I think you need to try to see every movie ever made and read every book ever written, and short of that, just do the best you can. Film school or internships are better than not doing anything at all, but you'll get more from watching everything on Turner Classic Movies for a year, if you pay attention.

Josh

Name: Tom

E-mail: CROWPS4@AOL.COM

Dear Josh:

GOOD LORD!!! HOW COULD IT BE PUT BETTER? I could not stand out of sight. Unfortunately i work at a video store and since i get free rentals i decided to take a look at "OUT OF SIGHT" which was being rented too much. I watched it and it made no sense. They switched times without captions which confused me they switched scenarios without telling you and it confused the FUCK out of me. i could barely understand what was going on. Besides the story was almost totally boring, it seemed like just a ploy to make money off of the recent fame of george clooney and Jennifer Lopez at the time. Cant

movies be made for artistic talent anymore? Im gonna agree on the leangth of movies also some movies are just totally too long for pace. The only movie that actually kept me seated for the whole time was THE MATRIX which i was surprised that it was actually good. I left the theater not realizing id just sat for 2 and a half hours thinking it was only an hour. it seemed TOO SHORT. thats how good it was. Josh if i were to recommend a movie id say see the matrix. and if youve seen it id like youre opinion on it.

Dear Tom:

I haven't seen "The Matrix," nor do I want to. As Bruce Campbell said, "If you have to fall back on five big set-pieces with automatic weapon fire and martial arts, you cannot make a good movie." He said that there might have been a few interesting ideas, but the were squashed beneath producer Joel Silver's need to give the audience the exact same shit every single time. I must also add, having been a big science fiction fan in my youth, "The Matrix" sounds like a really dumb SF idea. We're all trapped in a computer or video game is a stupid idea. SF literature moved past where SF movies presently are in about 1935. But if you liked it, God bless you.

Josh

Name: Leo G.F. Landry
E-mail: lgfl@yahoo.com

Hi Josh,

Am enjoying your website, which I just "discovered." No questions, except one quick one at the end. When I read your article about the Walk of Fame, my reaction was: well, with all the steady work you've been doing over the years, surely by NOW you have the 4800 bucks. After all, you wrote that piece in 1991, so after 8 years if you'd saved \$600 a year for each of those 8, you'd have the cash ready to hand over to the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce!

Or has the price gone up since then?

Leo

Dear Leo:

No doubt it has gone up. I need all of my money to make my movies.

Josh

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

Hey Josh,

Well to elaborate on my earlier comment on TSNKE. What I meant by "very different I haven't seen anything like it before" is that the idea was very original and there isn't any other movie with a plot like

that and it was quite enjoyable to be able to see an movie that didn't have a plot that's been done so many times that you know everything that is going to happen before seeing the movie. Sorry if the comment sounded negative it was late and I probably wasn't paying too much attention to what I was writing. I really enjoyed TSNKE and i hope i can find it somewhere so I can purchase it...but so far no luck with that.

---Kristin

Dear Kristin:

It's not that you sounded negative, which you certainly have the right to sound if that's how you feel, I just wanted more of an explanation. When I set up this website and posted these articles and essays and scripts, I was sort of hoping people would read them and discuss them -- as well as possibly seeing my films and discussing them, too. That hasn't been the case. As for getting "Thou . . ." try blockbuster online.

Josh

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

Hey Josh,

Well I am proud to say that I have now seen Running Time, Lunatics, and TSNKE. I just got done watching TSNKE it was very good. Very Different I have never seen anything like it before, so it was a good change. I do love my video store they have both Lunatics and TSNKE so thanks to them i got to see both. I don't have any questions sorry. Keep up the great work and i can't wait to see your next film. Good luck with it.

---Kristin

Dear Kristin:

Perhaps you could elaborate a bit on "Very different, I have never seen anything like it before."

Josh

Name: Justin
E-mail: justind@start.com.au

Dear Josh:

I apologize for the amount of questions up front, I have been saving them for a while.

Thank you for your time.

Justin.

Dear Justin:

OK, you win for the most questions I've ever gotten at one time. I'll take them one by one . . .

1) If you used ASA 64, how did you light the shot with BC going through that tunnel?

I didn't light it, it's entirely natural lighting. I did, however, walk through the tunnel numerous times in advance with a light meter to convince myself I'd get an exposure.

2) After reading your piece on William Wyler, I see you admired him for his diversity, what do you think of film makers who work within the same boundaries for the majority of their career?

Generally, I think it's a drag. There is Alfred Hitchcock, whom I admire greatly, but the least interesting aspect of his career to me is his material. Admittedly, whenever he made anything other than a suspense film it sucked, so he was much better off sticking to the genre he knew best and loved. Nevertheless, I am a big admirer of diversity.

3) Having an obvious distaste for all current films, how do your filmmaking peers react to your opinions? And have you had any confrontations?

They think I'm slightly crazy and somewhat hysterical. My good friend and co-producer, Jane Goe, says that I occasionally sound like a crazy man standing on the corner screaming about socialism. I used to have so many confrontations that this was one of the major contributing factors to my stopping seeing new films. Like right now, I do not need to argue with everybody about "Star Wars." The last thing on earth I'm interested in seeing is a sequel to a sequel to a sequel.

4) Can you take anything away from a film that you did not like? ie, it was well edited, the music was emotive etc...

Sure, but who cares? As I've said before, all reviews now begin with "The story sucked, but the effects were great" or "The story blew, but cinematography was beautiful." For instance, "Wyatt Earp" is a dreadful, awful, overlong mess, but Owen Roizman's photography is stunning. What I learn from that is, if you can afford Owen Roizman your film will look great.

5) No pun intended, was the running time of "Running Time" a major factor in the film not getting theatrical distribution? If it was did you think about shooting additional material? And do distributors give reasons why films are or are not picked up?

The running time of "Running Time" was undoubtedly a factor in it's not getting a theatrical release, as was the black and white, and the 16mm. This was my most extreme example of thumbing my nose at convention. If what "they" want is not a consideration, then the only consideration is what's best for the film. "Rope" is 80 minutes and it's too long. I wasn't going to do that. I worked from a 73 page script and got a 70 minute movie. I would like to think that the film is refreshing in its not being too long, as I find most movies to be. And sure, distributors seemed all too happy to explain why they didn't want the film.

6) Have you ever liked a film for technical accomplishment alone?

All the time, but not a lot.

7) Would you ever take a job on a project that was developed by someone else, under any circumstances?

Look, I'm like an old, one-eyed whore that nobody wants to fuck. If I have any integrity at all it's because all the rejection forced it on me. Nobody else wants to make my pictures so I have to make them myself. If Walter Hill offered me "Alien 5," for instance, even though I am adamantly against sequels and hated Alien 3 & 4," I'd take it in a heartbeat. The fee would undoubtedly be more money than I've ever seen in my life. Then I'd take my new found riches and go make more independent films. Does it seem like I've thought about this?

8) Have any of the people who have asked your advice on filmmaking come to you with a finished product yet?

No, no movies. A few scripts which stunk, but that's it.

Lastly I really enjoyed Running Time and hope the film gets seen by a wider audience. I would like to thank you for sending and signing my copy. Good luck on your next film. Would it be possible to add an addition to your site dedicated to your new film, with updates on progress and maybe even a journal.

No.

Josh

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