

Josh Becker DGA

Directing From The Edge



Q & A Archive
Page 37

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

Josh,

This trouble you are having getting people to take a look at "Hammer" really bites. I wonder what the problem is?

Is there a particular "type" of film that these film festivals go for, or some particular criteria? It really baffles me, since it's not like indie festivals are looking for big budget films, or "Pearl Harbor"-like plots. In fact, most indie films I've seen, good or bad, don't seem to have any sort of "catchy" plot or theme. "Brothers McMullen," for example - "3 brothers mull meaning of life and love...." I mean, "the end of the folk music movement" is at least an interesting notion, whether the film is any good or not. Plus I'm sure that "Hammer's" production values must be pretty decent, since it was not inexpensive to film, and you're not exactly inexperienced.

So what do you suspect the problem is?

Thanks,

August

Dear August:

I wish I knew. I thought "Running Time" was the perfect festival film and it didn't get into any big festivals, either. There's three distinct possibilities: 1.) My films suck, 2.) My films are too edgy and intelligent for these festivals, or 3.) There's a conspiracy against me, widespread, deep and vast. None of these answers truly satisfy me, though.

Josh

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

Josh,

I too liked "Moulin Rouge". I didn't know it was a remake. John Huston did it too?

Also, would you say you're having the toughest time selling "If I Had A Hammer" out of all of your films? What's the next step if there are no festivals? Hope the Chicago one works out.

Have a good one.

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

I'm not sure what I do next. I haven't had a very good time trying to sell any of my movies. So far I haven't been able to get any ditributors to even watch the film. My friend said that if you keep repeating the same action hoping for a different result, that's a sign of insanity. It sounds like my film career. BTW, I don't think I'm going to send the film to the Chicago Flim Festival.

And yes, John Huston made "Moulin Rouge" in 1952 with Jose Ferrer as Toulouse-Lautrec. It won several Oscars for costumes and art direction.

Josh

Name: Aaron
E-mail: agramham83@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Hey, quick question. Just wondering your opinion on Henry Hathaway and both "Call Northside 777" with James Stewart and "Legend Of The Lost" with John Wayne?

Stewart really did a tremendous job in that film, he had a certain edge that was quite fun to watch.

Anyway, any thoughts?

Dear Aaron:

I like Henry Hathaway a lot, particularly: "The Real Glory" (1939), "The House on 92nd Street" (1945), "Kiss of Death" (1947), "Call Northside 777" (1948), "Down to the Sea in Ships" (1950), "Fourteen Hours" (1951), "The Desert Fox" (1951), "Seven Thieves" (1960), "Nevada Smith" (1966), and "True Grit" (1969). I've never seen "Legend of the Lost." I think Hathaway had this tremendous, no-nonsense style that gets right to the point and moves on. He was a very snappy, believable director.

Josh

Name: Mary
E-mail: atropos223@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Thanks to a friend and her satellite dish I've just viewed "Soul Possession" a bit early. It was great seeing Ares back to his conniving, manipulative, malevolent self. Thanks for making our last look at Ares a classic.

I've been so impressed with the acting talent in New Zealand throughout the run of Hercules and Xena, and Kevin Smith certainly seems to be a standout in that category. If you had the chance, what kind of film would you direct him in?

Thanks again for "Soul Possession"

Dear Mary:

Whatever it is, Kevin ought to have a scene with his shirt off, he really is in great shape. Kevin has a terrific sense of comedy -- I just love his ad lib line when Xena kicks him in the head and he says, "That's gonna leave a mark," as well as his delivery of the line (also an ad lib) "Call me."

Josh

Name: Carl Savoy
E-mail: CS210@yahoo.com
Dear Josh: Hi Josh,

I noticed your link section has links to your actor/director friends' sites. Would it be possible to also include some of your all time favorite places to visit online? Like your fav movie info sites, chat rooms, discussion boards, etc.? Where do you hang out online?

Carl

Dear Carl:

I don't. I don't go to any of those places. I answer my email and get the hell off-line. I do look things up and snatch photos from IMDB.

Josh

Name: Ray Mancini
E-mail: mancini28@aol.com

Josh,

What did Sam Raimi think of Pearl Harbor? When you and your old film buds go to the movies together, do you guys have coffee or something afterwards to discuss the film in depth?

Thanks,
Ray

Dear Boom Boom:

Sam liked PH, but he's always been a supporter of big Hollywood nonsense. We did not have a cup of coffee after the movie, although I suggested it, but Sam had to go.

Josh

Name: Cindy
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

A few simple questions dealing with Xena.

I've heard it spoken many times about Xena that Lucy and Renee never do any actual nude scenes in the show. It's either shot with hidden clothing or doubles. My question is, given there have been a few episodes that you've done that had Xena and/or Gab naked, who was it that initially informed you that Lucy and Renee didn't personally do any of the nude scenes themselves (since it would appear you as a director would need to know that info to figure out how to shoot it)? Did Lucy and Renee let you know that themselves or did someone else fill you in on that.

Second deals with the read-through's done with the episodes. It was explained that the actual read-through is done for an episode while they are filming the episode prior. Just out of curiosity, do you know what episode they were filming when ya'll did the read-through for "Soul Possession"? Also, do you know what episode they did the read-through

for while you were filming "SP". I know the finale was the last 2 episodes filmed, but do you know if there was another episode filmed after "SP", but prior to the finale? ("Many Happy Returns" with Alex Tydings perhaps?)

Also about the ending of "SP". Given Harry(Xena's soul) and Mattie(Gab's soul) were married, and given that the souls were switched between Harry and Annie in the episode; does this now mean that Annie(Xena's soul) and Mattie(Gab's soul) are now married since Annie is now the actual person(soul) that Mattie married, just in a different body?

Cindy

Dear Cindy:

Nobody had to inform me of how nudity would be handled, it's an issue the producers, the costume designer and I are dealing with from the outset of pre-production. Generally, you use flesh-colored diving suits, although sometime it's simply little tiny bikinis. That episode I did, "Kindred Spirits," with all the young naked Amazons at the beginning was a much bigger hassle than anything with Lucy and Renee.

Regarding the read-throughs, I don't know what was going on before me, but after the ep was called "Three Bags Full" with a cute young girl that's to be sacrificed.

And, as to whose soul is whose, and who is with whom? You decide.

Josh

Name: mike benfield
E-mail: tweber@wauknet.com

Dear Josh:

Hello! Great "Essay"! As I am neither a screenwriter or any kind of a writer for that matter I don't know where to start or look for information on my movie idea. Any info would be helpful.

Thanks for your time!
Mike

Dear Mike:

You write "Essay" like it's the name of something. Which essay? Any info on what? I guess you're not a writer, because you couldn't any less clear in four lines than you've been.

Josh

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

Dear Josh:

I got a big surprise this weekend when I went to see "Moulin Rouge." I actually enjoyed it. There was actually some wit, intelligence and a story to go with all of the gorgeous eye candy. And using the anachronistic songs worked, too.

You know, I always wondered how they found enough movie reviewer whores to say good things about crap like "Pearl Harbor." Then I read an item in USA Today where Sony Pictures admitted that one of the newspaper reviewers they're always quoting in their ads is just a product of their publicity department. The only thing that surprised me is that there's just one of these phony reviewers. Where's a special prosecutor when you need one?

Josh, does it ever get better? Or do crap kings like Michael Bay win in the end? Oh well, I'm looking forward to your "Xena" swan song and "If I Had a Hammer."

Sincerely,
Charles

P.S. Enjoying the new Web site design, too.

Dear Charles:

I'm glad to hear you liked "Moulin Rouge." I always kind of liked John Huston's version. I was also amused by Baz Luhrman's "Strictly Ballroom," and Nicole Kidman is a babe, so it seems possible that it's good.

Does it get any better? I believe it will, at some point. Do the Michael Bay's of the world win and the Josh Beckers lose? We'll see?

Josh

Name: Kain
E-mail: evildeadfreak@earthlink.net

Dear Josh:

Bruce Campbell's book If Chins Could Kill: Confessions of B-Movie actor just got released. Will you be adding it to your reading list? Also will you ever write an autobiography?

-Kain

Dear Kain:

I read the first draft and I will definitely read the published version (he said he'd send me a signed copy). I have already written one.

Josh

Name: Brenda Andrews
E-mail: BrendaAndrews@Excite.com

Dear Josh:

Just a word of thanks for sharing your memorable experiences. I'm so glad you encouraged LL to smile as Xena. As the seasons went on and things got more intense and darker, I wished I could see that smile more. It was contagious!

Dear Brenda:

Yes, Lucy has a big bright contagious smile.

Josh

Name: (Scary) Mary Gilligan
E-mail: mary_r@attglobal.net

Josh,

I just laughed out loud for 20 straight minutes reading your Alaskan hitch-hiking diary. I think it's those wacky, one-of-a-kind experiences you've had that make you the interesting person and filmmaker you are today. Man, if anyone else had written it I'd think it was all bullshit.

Were you bummed about Anthony Quinn dying the other day? They were profiling him ad nauseum on NPR and I kept remembering some of the things you told me about directing him in the Hercules minotaur movie. What a character!

BTW Shirley, I like the new home page a lot. It doesn't seem "Christmas-y" to me, just bright. That's a good thing, I'm sick of web pages with black backgrounds. (Uh-oh, guess I'd better start updating my own!) That picture of the slavedriver is great, though I'm a little unnerved by the sight of a smiling Josh Becker.

Peace!

Dear Mary:

A thousand greetings. I'm glad you enjoyed the Alaska Journal. That's what I wrote at the time, good or bad, that's just how it was. Regarding the demise of my good buddy Tony Quinn, you can't be all that surprised when an 86-year old man dies. Besides, the son of a gun lived three normal lives. I'm glad to have worked with him.

Peace to you, Mary.

Josh

Thanks Mary, and re-"hi" (I don't know if you remember but we corresponded briefly a few years ago). Brightening up the front page was the slavedriver's idea, but I do like it, too, now. I think he's smiling in that picture because he's in his natural element: on a set in the director's chair.

Shirley

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

Josh,

Do you know anything about Michael Bay? I didn't really until I read a piece on him in the new Rolling Stone today. He is such a prick-assed yuppie that it makes me furious. He actually says stuff like "My girlfriend is fucking hot" and "I like to say the word fuck a lot. It's a good word." and other 7th grade shit.

What's worse Jerry Bruckheimer says he's the Spielberg of his generation. I'm thinkin' you may be right about how low the Hollywood standards are when I hear a well known producer (who also makes shit) call the worst of the A-list directors the next Spielberg...(and I know you didn't like "Schindler's List", or "Pvt. Ryan", but "Jaws", "Close Encounters" and "Raiders" are great!

I'm just so pissed off that I about chugged a 6 pack. Still upset so I decided to write to the most pissed off movie buff of all.

That makes me real mad. What makes you madder? (The stupid festivals?)

Have a good one.

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

I thought Steven Spielberg was the Steven Spielberg of this generation, I mean he is still working. Look, Bruckheimer thinks that terrorists taking over a prison is a good idea, so who gives a shit what he thinks? Bay and Bruckheimer think a really beautiful, romantic line of dialog is "Gee, you're pretty," so clearly these guys are just LAME.

Josh

Name: Anne
E-mail: chiajeng@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Would you please explain to me how do "set pieces" in Star Wars obey a classical three act structure?
Thanks a lot!

Dear Anne:

How can set pieces have any structure at all, they're just sets with scenes in them. I suppose you could have a big set piece within each of your acts. The question doesn't make sense.

Josh

Name: Jason Keller
E-mail:

Hi Josh,

Since I live here in Chicago. I was wondering what movie you were interested in entering in the film festival here?

I know you stated you haven't had much luck with them. sorry about that. Maybe one of these days, luck will be with you.

anyway, good luck on your work. p.s. when is the chicago film festival?

Dear Jason:

The Chicago International Film Festival is Oct. 4-18. This is their 37th year, they're an old festival, as festivals go.

Josh

P.S. The name of the film is "If I Had a Hammer."
-Shirley

Name: Andy.
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Hi. Just dropping a line saying, that how having seen some of your films, that you're an intelligent director, who makes intelligent films. This is NOT a 'brownnose' email, simply an opinion. It's refreshing to see such material when the market is swamped with crap. Even more grating are the in your face 'worthy' films, (witness Pearl Harbour, something that could have been great, turned into Disney syrup). That's it. All said.

Hang in there.

Dear Andy:

I'm hangin'. Yes, I'm an intelligent filmmaker caught in the world of knuckleheads. There's an irony there, just not a very good one.

Josh

Name: Hannah
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

In response to the newsletter from the Shirlmeister asking our opinions on the new look... I like the picture--looking very jaunty and cavalier on the set. As for the color scheme, it leans a bit towards "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas" for my tastes, but it's not too over the top. I'll give it a 9 out of 10 on technical merit and a 6.9 on artistic marks. Good enough for the bronze. Watch out for that East German judge though, he's brutal.

Dear Hannah:

Yes, it's perhaps a tad on the Christmasy side, but I was tired of the dark, gloomy, scowling look.

Josh

Dear Hannah,

Shucks, thanks. I was going for a 'Springtime in Jamaica' type of look, but I must say I'm a lifelong fan of dear old Dr. Seuss (may he rest in peace).

Shirley

Name: Mark Ratzlaff
E-mail: flying_pigs@hotmail.com

To Josh Becker

Hi, my name is mark ratzlaff. I am doing a Career Project for school, the career I hope to get into is directing. For our projects we need to interview 2 people who are currently in the career of our choice. I was hoping that maybe you could answer this list of interview questions that I came up with to help me learn some more about directing. If you could I would really appreciate it, or if you don't want to or can't, could you please e-mail me and tell me that you can't, or if you know anyone else that might be able to. Thank you, Here are the questions....

WHY DID YOU WANT TO GET INTO DIRECTING?

HOW DID YOU GET INTO DIRECTING? DID YOU GO TO FILM SCHOOL? OR STUDY SOMEWHERE ELSE?

COULD YOU EXPLAIN THE PROCESS OF GETTING INTO THIS PROFESSION FROM WHAT YOU DID AFTER HIGH SCHOOL TO GET TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY.

WHAT WAS THE MOST FRUSTRATING OR DIFFICULT PART TO GET TO WHERE YOU ARE NOW?

COULD YOU EXPLAIN A TYPICAL DAY AT WORK?

KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WOULD YOU CHOOSE THE SAME CAREER AGAIN?

DID YOU HAVE TO TAKE ANY BIG RISKS, ANY THAT YOU ARE GLAD YOU TOOK, OR ANY REGRET?

WHAT SORT OF STRESSFUL ORDEALS MIGHT YOU BE FACED WITH IN YOUR PROFESSION?

DOES YOUR PROFESSION REQUIRE YOU TO PUT IN EXTRA TIME? IF SO HOW MUCH AND WHAT FOR?

WHAT ARE SOME SKILLS THAT HELP YOU IN THIS CAREER?

WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE MOST, AND THE LEAST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE ARE YOU FACED WITH AT WORK?

WHAT KIND OF ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR NORMAL WORKPLACE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO GET INTO THIS CAREER?

CAN YOU RECOMMEND ANY OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THIS CAREER?

Thanks again for taking the time. Hope you have a great day. Thanks Bye!

From Mark

Dear Mark:

I hate this kind of crap, and I get particularly irritated by your presumptuous attitude of, do this, do that, then email me, then make some other Recommendations. Sorry, not interested.

Josh

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

Josh,

Well shucks. Hoping you'd make Telluride. That'd definately be a good one to go to. What other festivals are you thinking of? Sundance, AFI, Worldfest?

Hey, you should blast off a VHS to the New York Independent Film and Video Festival. They'd be good. They are large fest that gets a lot of attention from the distributors. Someone there knows of me...They called me and wanted me to send them my picture. If they have heard good things about me (no idea whatsoever how in the hell that happened, I've never even seen my movie with anyone but the guys that helped me make it) then maybe you'd really throw em. Look it up on the net if you're interested. The deadline is this coming week. Hope something works out with "HAMMER" for ya.

Have a good one.

Sincerely,

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

I don't have much luck with these festivals. I have the entry form for the Chicago International Film Fest right here and I may enter, I'm not sure.

Josh

Name: Mandy
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Question about "Soul Possesion".

A pic for the episode is out where Lucy is hopping out of a cake in a 'whipped-cream' bikini. I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. My questions is, what was Lucy wearing when she did that? It looked like I saw a flesh-colored bikini bottom on her lower half; couldn't tell about her upper half. Did she have a flesh colored bikini for her upper half as well, and was that real whipped-cream, or just a specifically designed bikini to look like that.

Also, how many folks were on set for filming those types of scenes where they are scantilly clad, and is there any shyness on Lucy or Renee's part when they film those types of scenes where they aren't wearing much?

Mandy

Dear Mandy:

The whipped cream was really ski boot insulation applied to a very tiny bikini, which can't be seen. As for modesty, Lucy could seemingly care less who was on the set while we were shooting. Lucy and Renee seemed to take being scantilly clad as part of their job and made absolutely no issue about it. Lucy's scene popping out of the cake is pretty funny, I think.

Josh

Name: Richard Chapkis
E-mail: richard.chapkis@verizon.com

Josh,

I hope that a simple e-mail praising your work doesn't seem like a waste of time to read. I just read Cycles an enjoyed it immensely. Keep writing.

Richard

Dear Richard:

I'm glad you enjoyed it. I had a good time writing it. I still think it

would make a good, unique movie.

Josh

Name: Tuomas Laasanen
E-mail: tuomas@cinemasf.net

Dear Josh:

Hello. I was wondering about the Super8-version of "TSNKE" that you did and what is the reason for not including it on the dvd.

Was it because of Bruce Campbell's appearance in it and that would have caused some payments for SAG or were you the one that didn't want to show the short to everyone? You seem to be quite honest about your filmmaking than let's say...Spielberg, so it's a shame that the pilot-version can't be seen.

-Tuomas

Dear Tuomas:

I tried to have it included on the DVD and Anchor Bay wouldn't pay for the music rights. All of our Super-8 films are scored with music from other, bigger movies. That's the problem.

Josh

Name: noelle
E-mail: apple4pear@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Sorry to hear about Telluride. That bites. I live near Phoenix so I hope you find a festival near there because I'm dying to see it. Not that Arizona is a hotbed of cinematic venues but one can hope. I heard you played RT in the Saguaro Festival here but I'm not sure if that was true or not. Your fans are pulling for you, noelle.

Dear Noelle:

Thank you. RT did show at the Saguaro Film Festival and won first place, too.

Josh

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

Dear Josh,

Actually, this is in response to "Chopped Nuts" and his girl-geek-directed question: Is it better to have women written in as set-pieces in film, or being subjected to a tough situation? The answer is obvious. I much prefer "Ms. 45" or even "I Spit on Your Grave" to "The Rock" or (insert action film made in the last 20 years with female sexual sidekick role here).

It is of note here, though, to say this: Whenever a film stars a woman, or has two women characters, it's called a "chick flick." Movies like "Reservoir Dogs," "Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels," and the like tend to star nothing but men, yet no one refers to them as "dick flicks." Is it then therefore assumed that movies starring men appeal to everyone, while well-written women's roles appeal only to women?

Once upon a time, a film like "Mrs. Miniver" wasn't considered a chick flick, just because it had a strong female character in the title role. Perhaps the fault lies in bad women's roles. If we saw them more often, we wouldn't categorize them so readily. It's so easy to dismiss a female in a film today as a romantic lead to the "real" star, and nothing more. Ah...cinema. Have you ever noticed how hard it is to find 10 actresses to nominate for the Oscar each year? It's not the talent...it's the roles.

--cindy

p.s. Josh, I'm happy to say that "Running Time" had a well-written female character. I liked her a lot. More importantly, I believed that she would exist.

Dear Cindy:

Thanks, although she is a cliché, the hooker with the heart of gold. I tried to make her as real as I could within that framework. My film "Hammer" has a very strong female lead, I think. Much stronger, smarter and more motivated than the male lead.

Oh, as a note to one and all, "If I Had a Hammer" was turned down by the Telluride Film Festival yesterday.

Josh

Name: Ben
E-mail: vagabond76@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

No, I didn't. But like you said, "Oh well." Cleveland Smith, however, was interesting because I thought that with your high standards, a slapstick

comedy would be above you. But it's good to know that you can ease up and be silly.

I see a lot of films with two director credits. What do you think of those? Is it something that you would never agree to? Do you think that they both have input about all scenes, or do you think that they chop up the story and take it piece by piece?

Dear Ben:

Who knows? In some cases one guy started it and another guy finished it, like "Come and Get It" on which William Wyler got co-director with Howard Hawks. I have two short films where I took co-director with Scott Spiegel, but by the third one we did together I got sole director credit. Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger took co-director, writer, producer credits, but everyone knew that Michael Powell did all the directing and Pressburger did the writing. So, who knows?

Josh

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

Hello Josh!

I wanted to Thank you again for donating an Autographed photo for our upcoming Charity Auction! It will start on June 1 and run until July 1. There are Autographed items from Many shows (like Xena, Hercules, Young Herk, Buffy, Angel, Star Trek+), plus Many other Great Items!!! :)

Could you please add a link to it on your web site? It's at:
<http://alwheaties.com/Auction.html>

Many Thanks for Everything!!! You're Great! :)

Take Care!

Angela L. Wheaton aka ALWheaties

Dear Angela:

My pleasure. I hope you get a lot of money for it.

Josh

Name: Julie

E-mail: getbentben@yomama.com or julijhnsn7@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Say, you haven't had a flamer on here for awhile. Well he did at least leave an email address. And thanks Ben we were all sitting around the "movie geek forum" wondering when someone would finally turn the topic of conversation to theology.

I do kind of get a kick out of the zealots that go into a rage because you didn't like a movie that they liked. For some reason the American Beauty contingent is particularly rabid. (you can tell i've spent some time in the deep dark recesses of the Q&Aarchives) I read an interview with the young actress who played the daughter. This was way back when the film first came out. She revealed an interesting thing about the film which was that they cut out the entire ending of the script: a trial against the daughter and her boyfriend (well the guy sleeping with her)who were both accused of killing the dad (spacey). So basically they just junked the whole murder mystery plot and went for um, something else.

Best, Julie

Dear Julie:

I've been putting up with these people my whole life. When I was in college 25 years ago, I was the film critic on the college newspaper and panned the film "Lenny." During one of my classes a girl turned to me and said, "You're film critic, right? The one that didn't like 'Lenny'." I nodded and she hauled off and slapped my face. The one I've been hearing forever is, "That's your opinion!" To which I used to respond, "No, I've been elected spokesperson for everyone on the planet, I guess you didn't hear."

Josh

Name: Ben

E-mail: vagabond76@yahoo.com

Dear Josh,

No one can attempt to judge you on your beliefs or opinions, but it's sad when the audience isn't intelligent enough to realize that "The Gospel According to Judas" contains several non-substantial, loaded statements. Neither being scholarly nor scientific presents any problem when dealing with Christianity. The whole story was written like a high school assignment, in that nothing was subtle. Father Giovanni is the hot-headed, religious freak, and the main character is level headed, but no less a coward and no more a Christian than Giovanni. The main character betrayed his heart. If he believed what he read, then he should have left the Church, gotten wasted and ended up a crispy critter in Hades.

A few posts back, someone referred to you "pointing out the follies of religion." It's said that he can't discern fact from pure fiction.

And about the bells on the dead people, I got a forwarded e-mail with all of these stupid explanations to silly phrases, and that was in there. I suppose that's where the phrases "saved by the bell," and "dead ringer" came from. Let me know if you want me to forward you the other ones; they're pretty damn funny.

Ben

Dear Ben:

So then I guess you didn't like the story. Oh well.

Josh

Name: Tom Thayer
E-mail: thaylers5@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Don't shit me here Josh, you tried to get "The Gospel According to Judas" published didn't you? It's the only story with a specific copyright notice attached to it. I think its extremely well written and is the most poignant of all of your short stories. I doff my cap to you. As far as the publishing houses go--fuck them, that's what the internet is for.

Dear Tom:

I wouldn't shit you, you're my favorite asshole (sorry, that's an old Drill Sgt. response). Anyway, I have sent out many of these stories for publication, including "Judas," but none have been published. I'm glad you liked it.

Josh

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

Dear Josh,

Sorry I didnt make myself clearer. What I meant to say was that I know you aren't wild about re-makes of other people's films. But strictly from a critique sort of standpoint, I was wondering if there was a movie that you had really thought "Boy I wish I'd directed that - I could have made it work!"

Since you mention those two historical films - and since you are a Teddy Roosevelt fan, I gather - what might you have done to make "Rough Riders" better? Or would you have tossed that script and cast, and started

from square one, with a better story to tell within the historical framework? (I know Milius has been obsessed with Roosevelt since before "The Wind and the Lion." And whatever happened to Milius anyway? He disappeared for most of the '90s.)

Same question for "Gettysburg." Were there parts that worked? For me, for example, most of the stuff with Jeff Daniels as Chamberlain was excellent, and could have been a movie by itself. Other than the miscasting of Martin Sheen and Tom Berenger's beard, how might you have approached a film adaptation of "Killer Angels?"

The reason I ask this is simply that so often I read your reviews, and understand completely what you say may be lacking in a particular film, but then I wonder "Well what might have made it better?"

Thanks,

August

Dear August:

Regarding Milius' "Rough Riders," that just needed to be shit-canned in its entirety. The script sucks, Berenger is completely wrong for the part, and Milius' direction stinks. As for "Gettysburg," the director, Ronald Maxwell, simply does not have a clue how to direct motion pictures. I'm not crazy about that script, either, in that it's not doing justice to Michael Shaara's book. I liked Jeff Daniels, but his phony mustache ruined his performance, and Berenger's beard is the fakest fake beard in film history. As to what I would do different, that's too big of a question. I'd do something different in every single moment.

Josh

Name: Fan X
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

A blessing on Anchor Bay for the dvd Running Time. One thing lacking: the original 8mm(?) short you refer to should be on it too, eh?

Dear Fan X:

I think you're referring to TSNKE. RT didn't have a Super-8 version.

Josh

Name: Chopped Nuts
E-mail: danjfox@home.com

Dear Josh:

Whew. So I'm back from the read. Talk about highs and lows. I only had one actor friend in, so I knew she could handle her part, the others were cast on the spot. Advice to others: ALWAYS make sure your talent are actors. the guy reading my narration could barely frickin' read, he made a mess out of things.

Apparently my script (a short) received the most commentary ever: not just at me but at the others in the room as well. The very first thing said to me was by a guy who looked something like an older Meatloaf (even dressed all in black): "I'm disgusted, repulsed, and enraged by this script". (He did later say that he liked my actual writing.) His first comment was followed by a young woman who thought the film was empowering to women (which seemed to be a general consensus between the women, I had others come up to me to actually use the words "thank you" for the script).

Man what a toss up. I got creamed, that first guy got creamed, and it was one of the best experiences in my writing career. Very cool.

Here's something that struck me though: I think there's an automatic response in some people to label something misogynistic if there's a woman victim in it. It's almost like an automatic response. My question is this: Why would you consider something as slanderous of women, of the writer being a woman-hater, if the proponent of this hatred is the villain of your piece?

I haven't read all of your scripts yet, so I don't know if you might have something along these lines. But in general I know there tends to be pressure put on movies to have a woman in there, somewhere (Bridge On the River Kwai, for example, had the nurse character - and the American for that matter - written in for this reason).

Maybe this question should be more for the ladies who hang out in the movie-geek den. Doesn't this addition of a set-piece woman seem more thankless than a woman put into a tough situation?

Sorry for the length of this everyone, my mind is in a whirl.

Dear Chopped Nuts:

PC is a very easy place to come from. I say as an artist it's your responsibility to write what you feel and what people think about it is their problem. And yes, I agree that you must get the most talented actors possible, everything hinges on them.

Josh

Name: Daniel Neumann
E-mail: neumann@hellseals.de

Hallo Josh,

Thank you for putting that many scripts online! I read most of them and I liked them all.

Too bad that Ball Breaker was not done in the 80s, because a younger Clint Eastwood would fit perfectly into the role of Ball Breaker. The script somewhat reminded me of "Rookie" and "To Live and Die in L.A." (don't ask me why). "Buds" was very much fun to read, as well as "Biological Clock". And now comes "Winds of Fate". I think this is the best script I have read from you this far. I could not stop reading it.

Well, I don't really have a question, but maybe you could ask Shirley to put the zip-versions of your scripts back online, because I like to read them offline on my palm, and it is very complicated to convert html-files into palm-text.

Keep on the good work! Meet you at the release-party of "Hammer" in Berlin!
;-)

Viel Erfolg bei Deinen Filmen,

Daniel Neumann

P.S.: did you know that "Lunatics" had been released here in Germany? Unfortunately not in theatres, but on video. They changed the title to "Lunatics: Duell der Alpträume" (duell of nightmares).

Dear Daniel:

I'm very pleased you're enjoying the scripts, that's why I'm posting them. As to "Ball Breaker" reminding you of "The Rookie," that's no coincidence, that was the next script Scott wrote after "Ball Breaker." Shirley will have to answer your question regarding the zip files. I had no idea that "Lunatics" was released in Germany. I like their title.

Josh

Dear Daniel,

Due to popular demand, I'll be making the downloadable zip files of Josh's scripts available again soon, probably within the next few days.

Shirley

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