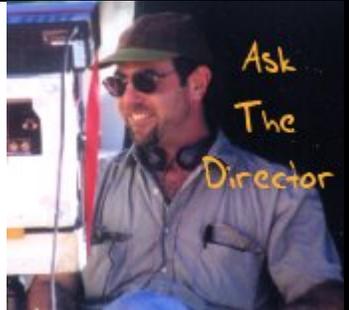


# Josh Becker DGA

## Directing From The Edge



### Q & A Archive Page 23

Name: Michael Anthony Lee  
E-mail: mal@kingston.net

Josh,

I've always wanted to ask this and always forget to.

A few years back when I was learning my craft as a writer, (Something I am still doing, and always will,) I heard about your 8mm early films.

Soon after I discovered the price for 8mm film was very close to \$100 for 3 mins worth in my little city. I was just wondering how much teh film cost back in the day when you and the guys were making magic and loved doing it?

In other words, can you remember some of the budgets you had when making some of the shorts? Or any other fun facts for other filmmakers?

As always, thank you for taking the time.

Michael

Dear Michael:

It seems to me when we all started shooting Super-8, you could purchase a roll of Kodachrome 40 or Ektachrome 160 for \$4.99 and it was another \$2.99 for processing. If you were even lower-budget than that you could buy a roll of K-Mart Super-8 film for \$4.99, with processing included. Sam Raimi and I purchased , shot and processed so many rolls of Super-8 between 1970 and 1980 that we both were allowed to go in K-Mart's backroom, dump out the big canvas bag of processed film and dig our's out. Sam would pick up my film and I would pick up his film. Both of us would always get outside K-Mart and unspool one roll just to see if there was an image on the film. If I recall correctly, "The Blind Waiter" cost \$300. Sam's Super-8 opus, "It's Murder!" cost \$4000-5000 and my big Super-8 film, "Stryker's War," cost \$5000. By that time we were buying old cars and wrecking them. That was the en! d of Super-8, then we moved to 16mm.

Josh

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

Dear Josh,

A different kind of question. Where were you 20 years ago today? When John Lennon was shot? Was that something that impacted you at all? Were you a Beatles or Lennon fan at all?

Thanks,

August

Dear August:

I was and still am a big Beatles fan and John Lennon getting killed affected me greatly. I was living in Hollywood at the time and saw the headline on my way out for coffee in the morning--I didn't have a TV at that time. It depressed me then and still depresses me. About a week after Lennon was shot, the Pope was shot. When I saw that headline in the exact same way as the previous one, I honestly thought the world was falling to pieces. Maybe I was right, too.

Josh

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

Josh,

Sorry about the two questions, but I just forgot to ask this the first time. ...Have you seen "Johnny Got His Gun"? If so, what did you think of it? It was years ago when I saw it, and was thinking of renting it, again. I remember it being very long (and rambling, somewhat), but very gripping and eerie.

Curious About Your Opinion,

-S.C. (RBD)

Dear S.C.:

I saw "Johnny Got His Gun" when it came out in 1971 and I clearly remember being very disappointed. It's an interesting idea that did not adapt to film very well. Also, Dalton Trumbo, the writer/director (and one of the blacklisted Hollywood 10) doesn't really know how to direct, this being his one and only directorial effort. I did rather like the depiction of Jesus, as a big burly strong carpenter, well-played by young Donald Sutherland. If you ever get a chance, check out Dalton Trumbo's first film, "Five Came Back" (1939).

Josh

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

Josh,

Don't know if you've seen this or not, but I thought it was an interesting review. ...There are some blatant name mis-matches, though (Jackson is referred to as "Walker"):

<http://www.horror DVDs.com/reviews/n-z/tsnke/>

-S.C. (RBD)

Dear S.C:

Thanks, I hadn't seen that review. Maybe I'm spoiled from having watched the crappy video tape for years, but I think this transfer looks damn good. As to their comment that the film ought to be in widescreen--hello!--it wasn't shot that way. It never functioned properly at 1:1.85 in the theater and full-frame on the video was wrong, too. This is how the film is supposed to look, and you can't change that in the lab.

Josh

Name: John Walker

E-mail: [john@monkeystealsthedrum.co.uk](mailto:john@monkeystealsthedrum.co.uk)

Dear Josh: Wow! You really DO reply to all these messages - and quick too! Thanks!

One question I wanted to ask last time, but forgot, was about the last scene in Evil Dead...

Since you were there (I think) or at least very close to the production at the time, could you tell me if the Sam Raimi/Bruce Campbell/camera accident rumour is true?

The rumour goes like this: Sam Raimi rides a motorcycle (with camera) through the woods and cabin towards Bruce Campbell: Except Sam doesn't stop when he's supposed to and hits Bruce with the camera/bike trying to get the best effect for the film. Bruce was knocked out/broke his jaw.

I have heard this so many places but don't believe its true. For one: the 'Evil Presence' stuff was done carrying a 2by4 not by riding a bike. Two: It looks to me like a post production zoom into Bruces mouth.

Could you finally set this rumour to rest for an old ED fan, from what you heard/saw?

Cheers!

John

Dear John:

Not only was I there, I thought up the silly shot. Sam had the camera on the Shaky-Cam, which was a two-foot 2X4 with the Arri-S mounted in the center. Sam is simply running full-blast--I was controlling the second door from the rafters--and ran smack into Bruce, but did not seriously injure him. The final push into Bruce's mouth was in fact an optical zoom. Tim Philo, the cameraman, and I had storyboarded the shot a few weeks earlier, convinced it was the proper ending, but Sam didn't like it.

As a little point of fact, Sam didn't even want to do the shot, but since he had no other ending and hadn't shot anything, Rob demanded that we shoot something, and that's all there was. It was the very last thing we shot before leaving Tennessee.

Josh

Name: Marcy  
E-mail: [marcene@netzero.net](mailto:marcene@netzero.net)

Dear Josh:

There's an old Danny Kay song ("The Fox" with Jud Conlong Singers, from "Danny Kaye for Children", MCA Records, 1958) that, except for the main "character" The Fox, sounded like an exceptional song that seemed very suitable/tailorable for your program.

It was partly the voice in that song (reminded me of "Jack's" voice) and partly the melody & tempo (swashbuckling) and the words.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Fox, the Fox, they'll never outfox the Fox.

Give him a fight to fight,  
a wrong to right,  
at any time of the day or night.  
They'll never outfox the Fox.  
(They'll never outfox the Fox.)

Give him a stream to ford, a ship to board,

He's always there with his cape and sword.  
They'll never outfox the Fox. Heh!  
(They'll never outfox the Fox.)

A daring pirate chief once up and robbed him.  
And what do you think the Fox did? He clobbered him!  
(With great finesse, he more or less clobbered him!)

Even a giant, who, was 12 feet 2,  
would run away if the Fox said 'boo!'  
They'll never outfox the Fox.  
(They'll never outfox the Fox.)

Wherever you try to find him,  
you'll find him where he is not, (is not!)  
He's hither and yon, he's there and gone,  
He's Johnny not on the spot (the spot!).

Strong as a locomotive, faster than a plane,  
You think he's here, you find he's there,  
You search for him in vain!

His enemies say 'Gadzooks! It spooks!'  
Shivering in their socks,  
They know that they'll never - he's far too clever -  
they'll never outfox the Fox!

The Fox, the Fox, they'll never outfox the Fox.

Nobody you could name could match his fame  
or ever beat him at his game!  
They'll never outfox the Fox.

(They'll never outfox the Fox.)

Not even Buffalo Bill with all his skill  
Or Superman with any plan  
could ever outfox the Fox.  
(They'll never outfox the Fox.)

About your Davy Crocketts you can chat away  
The Fox once made a hurricane go thatta way!  
(With one big blow he made it go thatta way!)

Not even jets that race could give him chase  
or even men from outer space  
could ever outfox the Fox.

They'll never outfox the  
Fox,  
never outfox the Fox,  
never outfox the Fox,  
never outfox the Fox.

\*\*\*\*\*

It's worth tracking down. If you do, let me know what you think. And while you are at it, please consider tweaking his role to be slightly more of a serious contender, and less of a dufus. I enjoy the humor, but you are missing a great angle that would make it a an even better program.

By the way, could you please consider putting Jack at the beginning of your line-up and Xena later? In fact, could you consider bringing back Hercules? He was so male, so cool, so understatedly sexy. At least release the show for rebroadcast from the beginning on some other channel. That was the best program you ever made!

Xena is too obvious/blatant/ violent and I'm now heartily tired of the male-dismissive, not-so-subtle 'she could be lesbian' slant. The other girls show is only fair (also too male-dismissive). I wouldn't even know they were there if I weren't waiting up for 'Jack'.

Marcy

Dear Marcy:

So then what you're saying is, you can *never* outfox the Fox, is that correct?  
A.) I didn't write the song, Joe LoDuca did (it's his fault), and  
B.) Both songs are clearly and obviously parodies of Gilbert & Sullivan, which pre-dates them both by 80 years. However, I did particularly enjoy the 1958 outer space and jet references in the Fox song. Also, Marcy, I'm sorry to be one to inform you, but "Jack of All Trades" was cancelled quite some time ago, as was "Cleopatra 2525," as was "Xena," for that matter. Battle on!

Josh

Name: Benedict  
E-mail: ben@berneusdavin.com

Dear Josh,

I read your review of "Sixth Sense" and wondered if when a filmmaker comes out of nowhere and produces one of the few films of current release that you can actually enjoy, do you get excited about a sopmore film?

Or do you assume it was a fluke of some sort.

The obvious reason I'm asking is because "Unbreakable" came out recently, and I think it was better than "The Sixth Sense." I'm hope, if you get around to seeing it, that you'll post a few words.

In watching it, I noticed that besides being able to make a good film, Shaymalan also takes a lot of time to make colors, names, locations, angles, props, etc. significant to the story. Either it foreshadows something or it explains something better (for those who notice it). I took Folk Tales in high school and we spent a year picking apart stories looking for motifs and symbolism. Most movies don't give you anything to analyze, but Night doesn't seem to be the same.

How much do you appreciate/look for/include this type of subtle technique in your films? I can imagine that when filmmakers do that, most people don't see it, but when someone does, it makes them happy. (On the other hand, I have a suspicion that if Robert Frost stood in my English classes and listened to my teacher, he would be hearing things he didn't intend.)

In any case, I like to look for that stuff because I think it improves the quality of the movie, and in the case of "Unbreakable," it certainly did. (There was only one shot that made me nauseous, which would've been okay if we were watching a grizzly murder.)

Thanks for you time and your insight.

Benedict

Dear Benedict:

I've got no insight to share as I've not seen "Unbreakable." I liked "Sixth Sense," but I don't think it's a particularly significant film. Having watched it a second time, it's a film I never need to see again. As opposed to color motifs or shapes, which are fine, I'm more interested in depth of character and dramatic themes.

Josh

Name: Michael Anthony Lee  
E-mail: mal@kingston.net

Josh,

Regarding Hollywood, I just saw the preview for a new film. I have four words for ya, "Dude, Where's my car?"

Is this what rock bottom looks like? Your comments?

Michael

Dear Michael:

I thought movies couldn't get any worse than they were in the 1980s, but they managed to get even worse in the 1990s. I see no reason for much more hope in the new millenium. My sense is that no one really wants to make good movies, they just want to make money, and with that motivation you will NEVER make a good film. Also, I don't think the Hollywood system will allow a good movie to slip through the cracks. If a movie costs \$50 million or more too many people have had their fingers in the mix. Not to mention that with that

much money, just to spend it all everyone has to work so slowly that they end up over-producing and over-directing every scene. On these really big pictures they shoot a quarter to a half a page a day.

If you're not shooting at least two script pages a day you're jerking off.

Josh

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

Dear Josh:

Two questions:

1. Can you update us on the progress of "If I Had a Hammer"?
2. What's your opinion of the work of writer/director John Milius ("Red Dawn," "Conan," etc.)?

Thanks,  
Charles

Dear Charles:

I came very close to finishing "If I Had a Hammer," except that when I saw everything put together, I sent some things back to be fixed. Everything is now fixed and I'm just waiting for my three new digital effects to be finished--I had them done, then had them redone. That ought to be this week. Next week I'll have my new pieces of negative cut in, then I will be able to make the final answer print. I'm seriously hoping to be completely done before Christmas, then I'll start screening for distributors in January. Regarding John Milius, he was once an OK writer, but he's never had the first clue how to direct. His scripts for "The Wind and the Lion" and "Return of the King" are both pretty good, but his direction and camera placement are just awful. Now he doesn't seem to be able to write anymore, either. His "Rough Riders" TV movie was a total embarrassment and a complete misunderstanding of Teddy Roosevelt, who comes off as a moronic oaf. TR may well have been our smartest president; he was certainly the most prolific, having written 28 books.

Josh

Name: John Walker  
E-mail: john@monkeystealsthedrum.co.uk

Dear Josh:

Hi! I just read your Evil Dead journal! Wow! It was very interesting and inspirational. I totally related to how you felt on set, but I'm glad it worked out in the end (after you stayed on)!

You said in it that Sam promised you could edit Evil Dead with him (and 'shook on it') - but were still skeptical about whether he'd follow through and let you help him... Since your journal ends with 'Back in Detroit' I was wondering if it ever happened?

(I see that Joel Coen is credited as Assistant Editor though (how did that happen?), did he take your place?)

I know it's tough in those situations (like I said, I really related to your Journal), feeling you have things to offer to the production but being overlooked despite being good friends with those in charge.

I'm glad to see you pulled through in the end, and got your own career off the ground (I see Sam, Bruce and Scott DID help you with 'Thou Shalt Not Kill...' which is really great!).

Thanks a lot for any comments/advice!  
Cheers,  
John.

PS - I guess my question is (in case you were wondering), how did things go with you Sam, Bruce, Rob etc after your Journal ended (although any more comments on about what I've said are extremely welcomed - and hoped for! :)

Dear John:

I did not end up helping with the editing. I did help out with the special effects, though. They hired an editor named Edna Paul in New York City and her assistant was Joel Coen. Since then, Sam, Rob, Bruce and I have worked on quite a few things together: Sam co-starred in TSNKE, Sam and Rob executive produced my film "Lunatics: A Love Story," I directed one of the pilot TV films for "Hercules," as well as nine "Xena" episodes, and the first two episodes of "Jack of All Trades." That's quite a bit of stuff.

Josh

Name: MJ Eason  
E-mail: mjeaston@tebiki.co.uk

Dear Josh:

Having just read your piece on the need for structure, I've been compelled to write a quick note.

Being a failing author, I recently decided to attempt a script and thus took it upon myself to read as much on scriptwriting as possible. Your piece on structure tied in perfectly with my thoughts since I finished my first, poorly-structured novel. It would seem to me that, unfortunately, scriptwriters can often get away with such a naive approach to writing; to avoid falling into such a trap again, I'm now planning to mull over your words as I prepare my script.

Thanks for your words of wisdom and all the best with your ongoing endeavours

MJE

Dear MJ:

I'm pleased you got something out of it. Hopefully, though, you read all six of them.

Josh

Name: Aaron  
E-mail: agraaham83@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Hello, quick question. Just watched your favorite director William Wyler's film The Big Country. Just wondering your opinion.

And by the way, I just received my Dvd of Thou Shalt Not Kill... Except and I really love it! It's been a big help to me. I've been reading the script (from your site), and watching the movie nonstop for a week. It's really very helpful. Anyway, thanks again.

Dear Aaron:

I completely love "The Big Country," it's one of my favorite films. I also think it's Charlton Heston's best film, and one of Gregory Peck's best, too. And what a terrific supporting cast: Burl Ives, who deservedly won the Oscar, Charles Bickford, Caroll Baker, Jean Simmons, and a very young Chuck Conners. It also has one of my favorite music scores, by Jerome Moros. The script is really great. I'm glad you're enjoying my film, as well.

Josh

Name: Michael Anthony Lee  
E-mail: mal@kingston.net

Josh,

This really has nothing to do with anything important, but I've always wondered where the little pictures on the site come from? I mean, what point in your life or what is the story behind them?

The one of you on this page, behind the camera, I asume is from, Running Time. But what about the one with you in the chair writing and some of the others?

Also, as a writer, actor (when they need someone with no talent) and producer of sorts with my own site, what do you feel having Beckerfilms.com has done for you, and would you do it again, even after some of the crazy email you have gotten?

Keep up the good work, Josh. You have my support.

Best,

Michael  
<http://www.michaelanthonylee.com>

Dear Michael:

The photo of me in profile with the baseball cap that's part of the "Directing From the Edge" logo is from the set of "Hercules in the Maze of the Minotaur," the shot of me sitting, looking serious, with the checked flannel shirt is from the set of "Lunatics." The half-lit close-up of me on the front page is a digital photo I took of myself. Regarding Beckerfilms.com, it's strictly an amusement for me. Although I do view it as sort of a cyber-resume, I've never gotten any work through it. I do particularly like having a place to post my essays, reviews and stories, since no one else seems to want them. And I rather enjoy playing Dr. Science or Cappy Dick regarding filmmaking.

Josh

Name: Rhonda  
E-mail: nahnah28@yahoo.com

Hey Josh,

It's me again. The only reason I said anything was, there were people talking about Ted, that he got a peice of metal in his eye or ear or something. And was wandering how he was doing and if the rumor was true. I figured since you were close to Ted you would be the logical one to ask. By the way thanks for answering my e-mail! You truly are the GREATEST!!

Love,  
Rhonda

Dear Rhonda:

Ted never called me back, which isn't surprising. I hope he's OK, too.

Josh

Name: Rhonda  
E-mail: nahnah28@yahoo.com

Hi Josh, I was just wandering if you've seen Ted Raimi lately? Rumor has it the he hurt himself. I know this has nothing to do with anything but just wandering if you'd send him our well wishes!! And let him know his fans are thinking about him!

Sorry so sappy!! LOL! Miss you on Xena! And can't wait for your next project!

Love,  
Rhonda

Dear Rhonda:

Help me, Rhonda. I just put in a call to Ted and left a message asking if he was OK? I haven't heard anything about him getting hurt, but he's such a klutz it wouldn't be surprising. There's some talk right now of me going back to New Zealand for one more zany comedy episode of "Xena" with Ted and Bruce.

Josh

Name: Tony Mitchell  
E-mail: tmitchell@jbwere.com.au

Hi Josh,

Just wondering what you think of Ed Burns and what you think of his films, particularly "The Brothers McMullen".

Dear Tony:

"The Brothers McMullen" was OK, particularly for no budget. I think he shot his wad with the one film, though.

Josh

Name: Ted mellors  
E-mail: Tmm254@psu.edu

Josh,

I'm a 20 year old film student and I have about 2 years left before I get out of this hell called school. I have one screenplay written and hope to have at least one more done by the time I graduate. I hope to produce this films independently. What is your advice on how to go about doing this. Thanks. Keep up the great work.

Ted Mellors

Dear Ted:

Get the money. Without the money you can't make the movie. I seriously recommend reading all of my structure essays and making very sure your script is structurally sound. Plus, get the very best actors available.

Josh

Name: Larry Stoll  
E-mail: Larry@atwoodhouse.com

Dear Josh:

I am trying to get a VHS video of "One Foot in Heaven". Do you know how I might obtain a copy?

Thanks,

larry

Dear Larry:

I liked "One Foot in Heaven," I thought Fredric March and Martha Scott were both very good. I just saw another picture that reminded me a lot of it, "Stars in My Crown" with Joel McCrea as a smalltown preacher. It was also quite good. Anyway, you might try Movies Unlimited, which seems to have most everything-- however I just checked for you and they don't have it. I do see it pop on TV now and then. Keep your eyes peeled and tape it.

Josh

Name: Keith Hawkins  
E-mail: keith15@inreach.com

Howdy, Mr. Becker.

TSNKE on DVD: Thank you Lord! I am deriving extreme pleasure from DVD TSNKE. A TSNKE friend of mine told me something about an address I can mail my DVD TSNKE cover to for you to autograph. Does such a place exist?

By the way, you mention in your audio commentary that if you close your eyes and just listen to the soundtrack, you can picture a real good movie. Although I think TSNKE is a good movie I still have a tip for the day: watch G.I. Jane with the sound off but with TSNKE playing in the background. It's actually almost watchable, then.

Let's go clean 'em up!  
Keith

Dear Keith:

I'm pleased you're enjoying it. It's a pretty good transfer, I think. The address to send in your DVD slipcover for an autograph is further back in the Q&A, but perhaps the kindly webmaster here, Shirley, will include it again.

Josh

Confuse-us say, "Wise man compliment webmaster." Here's the address from which I'll forward it to Josh: Shirley Robbins, P.O. Box 86, East Vassalboro, ME 04935

Shirley

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

Dear Josh:

I finally saw "American Beauty," which was the topic of much debate here some time ago. I really must thank you, because having read your essays on structure, etc. I think I understand why I enjoyed individual parts of it, but somehow felt unsatisfied once it was over. Clearly, some good characterizations by talented performers, and some individual vignettes that were fairly compelling and/or funny, just didn't add up to a good movie.

To me, the "What if" premise that you describe was a good one: what if a middle-aged guy essentially "woke up" one day and began taking a look at what and where his life really was?

So my question is - do you think that that premise and those performers could have been developed into a good movie? In true Monday morning quarterback style, what might you have done had someone handed you that script and said "whip this thing into shape?" Would you have left the funny parts? Would you have dropped the subplot with the family next door?

Thanks,

August

Dear August:

The first thing I would do is decide what point I'm making and what's my theme? If the "What if . . ." really was what if the father in the average American family quit his job one day and decided to work at McDonald's, what would his wife and kid do? How would they handle it? Then the point might be: everyone has to pull their own weight. Then you'd have no use for the neighbors, the pot subplot, the neighbor's father thinking his son is homosexual subplot, nor the "Lolita" infatuation with the underage girl subplot. How you rewrite it all depends on what point you're trying to make. As it is, there is no point. Or, perhaps, the point is: if you quit your job you will be murdered. Or, if you make your neighbor's father think his son is a homosexual, then you'll get murdered. Or, if you're infatuated with an underage girl and don't have sex with her, then you'll get murdered.

Josh

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

Hello Josh,

I just found out that express.com is the only dealer who does not have the TSNKE-DVD yet. I ordered it somewhere else.

Thank you,

Daniel

Dear Daniel:

Well, I'm glad we worked that out.

Josh

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

Hello Josh,

I wonder why noone else asked this question before... what happened to the TSNKE-DVD? It should have been released on October 24th, but the people at express.com told me, it has not been released yet and they don't know when it will be. Do you have any information about this?

Thank you,

Daniel

Dear Daniel:

Try someone else beside express.com. It did come out and people have been buying it. Try Amazon or Reel.com or Best Buy.

Josh

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

Howdy, Josh!

This election is just too bizarre for words. I share your frustrations, and am one of those who would NOT rather "just get it over with;" I'm interested in seeing who really got more votes, fair & square. I mean, aren't we supposed to be living under "the rule of law," and isn't Florida legally entitled to recount until they get it right? Still...what a mess!

But I digress. Here's what I wanted to ask: I have the opportunity to see a 65mm print of "Lawrence of Arabia" at the main theatre on the Paramount lot later this month, intermission and all. Frankly, I'd go to see Roumanian farming documentaries at that theatre, because I think it's about the best in the universe, but, with your interest in classic films, I thought I'd ask you: should I drop everything and run right out to see this showing? If so, what are the qualities you like most about "Lawrence"?

Knowing what informed viewers like you enjoy about a film like this will, I think, enhance the pleasure of seeing it for the first time.

best holiday & other wishes,  
F. R.

Dear F.R.:

"Lawrence of Arabia" is one of my very favorite movies and that's the way to see it. BTW, it's a 70mm print, it's a 65mm negative--the extra 5mm on the print is for the soundtrack. This is something Hollywood can't do under any circumstances now and what I miss most in movies--a big, expensive, action spectacle that's intelligent. And it's not that it's not stupid, it's smart. The casting is brilliant, the score is great, the photography couldn't be better, it's all shot on location, and it has a terrific script, what else could you want? The second half is a little lumpy, but I forgive it. Have a wonderful time.

Josh

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

God-Damnit, Josh,

I've just watched the DVD of TSNKE for the 2nd time in a row, now. ...What do I have to do to get a copy of "Strykers' War"? I will do just about anything to see it!

STNAP,

-S.C.

Dear S.C.:

I don't know what to suggest. I wish it were on the DVD.

Josh

Name: Bookoo

E-mail:

Josh,

Do you think that being an independent filmmaker with a DGA card hurts your chances for entrance into Independent Film Festivals?

All the best,

Bookoo

Dear Bookoo:

No, I honestly don't think it means anything. It's not like a festival knows this information anyway. I would much rather be a DGA member then get into festivals anyway. My interest in film festivals, however, has completely dwindled over the years.

Josh

Name: Safiyya Dharssi

E-mail: [babybluegal@chickmail.com](mailto:babybluegal@chickmail.com)

Dear Josh:

Hi , I'm a student in the 9th grade and we are doing research projects. My friend and I are doing The History Of Movies and we would like to interview a tv director. We could do the interview on email if you would allow us to. If you are available for the interview please email me back at: [babybluegal@chickmail.com](mailto:babybluegal@chickmail.com) , Thanks.

Dear Safiyya:

With all due respect to you and all students everywhere, I don't give a crap about your school papers. If you have a question to ask, ask it.

Josh

Name: Carmen

E-mail: [citizencarmen@yahoo.es](mailto:citizencarmen@yahoo.es)

Dear Josh:

I graduated in English last June and am writing my postgraduate project on the film adaptation of The Collector, but I have hardly found anything valuable. What a pity, such a fascinating film. I am desperately looking for criticism of this film in order to support my research. Do you know any film magazine that may have this information? Thanks a lot.

Dear Carmen:

I just checked all six of Pauline Kael's books of reviews that I own, and not a single reference to "The Collector." There's the little blurb review in Leonard Maltin's book. He gives the film three stars and says, "Chilling, if not altogether believable." There is also Jan Herman's very good biography of William Wyler called "A Talent for Trouble," that has a chapter on the film. I personally think it's lesser Wyler, which still makes it a very interesting film.

Josh

Name: Andy Hardy

E-mail:

Hi Josh,

Would it be possible to include the dates when you posted your essays/short stories/film reviews with the titles on your "From the Pen" main pages?

Thanks very kindly,  
Andy

Dear Andy:

They're all dated at the top of the opening page.

Josh

Name: Coolhand Luke

E-mail:

Hey Josh,

Isn't it unusual for a fan-fiction writer to get a break as a TV writer with no prior credits? How did Melissa Good get so lucky on "Xena"? What made Rob Tapert take a chance with her? Is he normally pretty liberal with regards to taking chances on unknowns?

Thanks so much,  
Coolhand Luke

Dear Coolhand Luke:

Sounds like desperation to me.

Josh

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

Josh,

Thought you might find this interesting. I've become aware of two films that seem to mirror each other. Yet, I don't think they have ever been compared by any critic or filmmaker. I'm talking about Orson Welles' TOUCH OF EVIL and the Coen bros. BLOOD SIMPLE.

Both films are about corruption in a small town and have many double and triple crosses that add up to murder. The low angle "bizzare" shots from "Touch" are all over "Blood" and most obviously, the Frances McDormand and M. Emmet Wash characters seem to be direct recreations of the Janet Leigh and Orson Welles roles. McDormand plays the pretty blonde who never knows what's going on. Infact, in both films the gals are assaulted in hotel rooms. And then there's Walsh's sleazy private eye. Just like detective Quinlin: fat, cigar smoker, cold blooded, and with that feeling that at one time, long ago, they were someone good. Both men are also shot suddenly at the films conclusions.

Have you ever noticed these similarities? I wonder if the Coen bros. did?

Best,

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

I never thought about "Blood Simple" in that light, but I do see what you're saying. On a more basic plot level, however, "Blood Simple" is one more variation of James M. Cain's "The Postman Always Rings Twice" or "Double Indemnity." In both of those films, though, you have a woman worth killing for. Although Frances McDormand is a good actress, she ain't Lana Turner, or Janet Leigh, for that matter.

Josh

Name: Ben  
E-mail: ben@berneusdavin.com

Dear Josh,

Film first, politics second.

In the whole process of making a film and having a production company, what are some of the more important legal issues that I should address? I told someone I was going to do this, and he said that I HAVE to be incorporated to avoid litigation, because eventually, someone WILL sue me. He ranted off several legal services (and the appropriate and intimidating price tags) that I cannot do without. How much, I'm asking, of filmmaking IS filmmaking, and how much is all of the other stuff?

About the election, I think someone (you or a previous question asker) asked why they don't revote. Wouldn't that be because now that the public knows how well Nader did, and in a revote, might very well change their vote to Gore. A revote is not the answer, in my opinion, but for sure the recount is called for. However, I don't really have a problem with the electoral system, nor do I believe that people who don't understand the ballot

and choose not to step out of the booth and ask someone, only to complain about it later should not be dealt with lightly. I don't doubt the dishonest nature of any human, Democrat or Republican, and would not be surprised to see this sort of thing happening every election year as a result of softening the process due to ballot confusion. The election system could potentially become a mockery -- people will flub their ballot just to see how their non-mainstream, first choice fared, and then change their vote accordingly.

I know this is an exaggeration, but I don't doubt that if they allowed a revote, or made some other unprecedented allowance for the ballot, that it would DEFINITELY be noticed by many unscrupulous people and would be taken advantage of.

But I'm just a "ludicrous sodomite," whatever the hell that means.

Thanks,  
Ben

Dear Ben:

Well, I think they should be able to revote in W. Palm Beach County due to their poorly designed ballots, which caused several voters to file suit that day. Regarding movies, however, you don't need to incorporate if you don't want to--it's rather expensive, particularly here in California--but you must create a legal entity so that you can take money from people. There are limited partnerships (which I always use) and there are limited liability corporations, which I'm not as up on as I should be. It really shouldn't be more than about \$500 for a lawyer to create a simple limited partnership for you. If they try to charge much more than that, they are a rip-off.

Josh

Name: Danny Cork  
E-mail: dannycork@hotmail.com

Dear Josh,

Totally see your point on the electoral college. Initially, (when polls showed Bush ahead) all the Republicans bitched about it. Now Gore's ahead in the popular vote, and these arguments are brushed under the carpet. What's really irritating is Bush's "just give it up Al" attitude. It's right down to the line, and he wants us to ignore missing votes, illegal ballots and ballots that are CLEARLY dimpled but not TOTALLY punched. He'd be doing the same damn thing if he was in Gore's position. People who complain about how long this is taking just want to rush this process so Bush can swipe the victory. Those who say "well we can't argue with the tradition of this and that" are partisan assholes. Traditions were created BY people to get what they want. And now, when they are useless, and the people of Palm Beach aren't getting what THEY want, surely some of these traditions need changing!! Blind faith to systems like this, is responsible for countless acts of racism, bigotry and religious wars. I lived in Britain for most of my life, and since living in America I've seen more bigotry and narrow-mindedness than I'd like to have. People such as Bush, are those who support ludicrous sodomy, and anti - marijuana laws. They are afraid of change, of those who are different, and favor more 'sane' actions like starting wars and screwing the environment (being close to the oil companies ensures this).

I envy anyone who lived through the '60s, and would like your opinion on the way society has gone since then. Better? Worse? I think we've been going backwards for the last thirty years, resulting in tolerance of all kinds of shit. It was rebelled back then, why not now? People my age (20) have quit voting drastically. And I am CERTAIN, that if ALL of the US voted, Al Gore would now be the president.

I'm sorry to rant on like this. I'm just seizing this opportunity to vent some rage. More people TRIED to vote Gore in Florida than Bush, that's what needs to be looked at. The idea of Bush representing and ruling our

country, just scares the hell outta me.

Thanks for your time,  
Danny.

Dear Danny:

Hey, you had to write that like I just had to write my little essay. Just to feel like you've done something. BTW, Gore hasn't quite got the 250,000 popular vote lead I predicted yesterday, it's still at about 215,000. Anyway, Are things better or worse than the 1960s? As I've said before, they were making significantly better movies back then. Civil rights, however, are much more fair now. We're not involved in a conflict like Vietnam, which is a very good thing. Culture and the arts are pretty boring now, which is a sad, dull thing.

Josh

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