

# indie source

FREE INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER MAGAZINE

a publication by Parker Entertainment Group in association with Stand By Entertainment

## Interviews

Daniel Rodrigues  
Karin Chien  
Samuell Benta  
Malte Greis  
Francesco Caradonna  
Chiko Mendez  
Ivan Hronec  
Ralph Cole Jr.

Summer 2012

## Highlights

Adobe Creative Suite 6 Production Premium and Vision Research Phantom Miro combine for fast, efficient filmmaking workflow

## Mr. Stage 32 Richard Botto Speaks

Making A Movie From Start To Finish:  
Advice From Veteran Film Producer

## Synopsis

Adobe and Cannes Film Residency Program:  
Technology Meets Creativity

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Summer 2012, Vol. 1, #4



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# Movies & TV production in France

## THE INCENTIVES GUIDE 2012



**FILM FRANCE**  
Commission nationale

*Movies and TV production in France*

## THE INCENTIVES GUIDE 2012

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PRESENTATION  
OF THE  
**TRIP**  
INCLUDED

Download free of charge this yearly updated English language booklet  
from Film France's website: [www.filmfrance.net](http://www.filmfrance.net)  
All you need to know about the French support system to cinema and TV.



Content includes information about the Tax Rebate for International Production (eligible production companies and expenses, application process, the cultural tests), how to co-produce feature films (qualifying to the French system, available funding for French-qualified co-productions), TV-dramas, series and TV-documentaries, as well as about other grants for film & TV (World Cinema Support and local subsidies).

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All About The Business

# Words From the Executive

I recently spoke with an aspiring filmmaker from Georgia, and we were discussing project plans and budgets. I will skip project plans for this discussion, as I am preparing an article about those for the next issue. However, during the budget portion of our discussion he asked me a question that at one point in time we have all asked someone in the industry. This question is one of the first questions I asked more experienced filmmakers when I was first learning the business. The question is simply, "Should I include P&A in my budget?"

Without thinking twice I immediately said "Heck yes you should". I know the first thing that goes through your mind is that it's already hard enough to raise a budget for production, let alone money to print and advertise it, and that statement is so true, and believe me I feel your pain on that, but in today's market place it's a must.

For a second let's pretend we are investors, and let's hear the pitch of the indie filmmaker. So, an indie filmmaker comes to you and says, "Hey Mr./Mrs. Investor, I have a great script I wrote, with a great director and crew to put this thing together, and I have some potential stars that will be very interested when the money is in place". You as the investor responds, "Ok great so how much do you need?" Indie filmmaker responds, "Two million dollars". We are going to pretend that as investors we are big shots and two million dollars is a drop in the bucket. So we respond with,

"Not a problem, I've got that lying around here somewhere, but first tell me the end game?" And this is the point where most people fall flat on their faces! Most indie filmmakers do not have a fully thought out end game.

Without an end game no investor worth his/her salt will invest in your film. You are telling them you want them to give you "X" amount of dollars, but you have no real plan on how to pay it back other than the usual spin that it's going to be so great that every major studio will want to pick it up. Reality is, you have a greater chance of your film landing in film "festival circuit hell" than you do a major distribution deal. Do not be fooled readers; very few films are bought at film festivals. For every one film that is bought at a film festival there are at least 25 that were not. Telling an investor we are going to get picked up by a major no longer flies. Major distributors have a ton of films they can choose from every year, and the veteran filmmakers are first in line for consideration. Betting on this is a bad move.

Seriously think about P&A and put it in your budget. With the right amount of money you can guarantee your film a theatrical release. Money talks, and there are a number of distributors out there that you can pay to release your movie on anywhere from 2-1000 screens, depending on your budget. Cinedigm is one that comes to mind. What does this do for you? It tells the investor you are

serious about doing everything in your power to make their money back and a profit. It tells an established distributor, or a pay for screens firm that you are serious about the success of your film and you are a cut above the 80%. It also allows your film maximum exposure, which means as a filmmaker you will be seen by other professionals. While your movie may not be a big box office performer an established producer could see it, like it, and decide that he wants to work with you on one of their nicely funded projects.

All in all it helps your career to raise the P&A with the investor(s) that fund the film. I know it's harder, because you are asking them for more money, but you are establishing a track record of excellence that will transcend that project. That investor's money is on the line, but your career and your word are on the line also. In a business, when a person's word means less than an LOI on a napkin. All you really have is your resume, don't have yours littered with underfunded and underperforming films.



Executive Editor  
Chris Parker



# Ear For Sound

## With Daniel Rodrigues

Interview By: Christopher Parker

**ISM:** How did you get your start in the entertainment industry?

**DR:** My first paid gig came from a friend of mine that used to work as video editor for a local TV station. At the time he was working on a TV spot for a cellular company and asked me if I had any music he could use for it. I sent him a track, and a few weeks later I got a check in the mail. From there I started to send out demos to producers and directors, and eventually I got hired to work on a few short films, which has led to other paying gigs.

**ISM:** When did you decide you wanted to become a composer?

**DR:** Since I was a little kid I have always loved music, and I always knew I wanted a career in music.

What I didn't know is what exactly I wanted to do in music. A few years ago I remember going to the movies, and within the first few minutes of the movie I decided that I wanted to write music for film.

**ISM:** Can you tell our readers exactly what a composer does?

**DR:** The job of a composer is to write music that will add an additional layer to the scene, to enhance the emotions on screen, or to imply emotions that are not present on the scene.

**ISM:** How do you approach composing music for a project?

**DR:** The project you are working on really determines what the best approach is, but for me it has almost always been the same few steps. The first step is to spot the movie with the director and producers; this is when we determine when there will be music and what the music should be. The second step for me is to develop the different themes for the characters and situations as well as creating a sound palette that I will use for the project. Once I have developed the themes and have chosen my sound palette,

I then start to compose the different cues that we determined in the first step. I normally like to start with rhythm and work my way from there utilizing the different themes.

**ISM:** You have composed for film and television; do you find one harder than the other?

**DR:** Film and television are two very different beasts. When it comes to composing I think the biggest difference between the two is the amount of time you have to work. In film, you can have anywhere from 6 to 12 weeks to complete 60 to 80 minutes of music, and on TV you have 1 week to complete anywhere from 25 to 40 minutes of music.

**ISM:** What tools do you use to accomplish your jobs?

**DR:** My main program is Cubase; I have been using it for several years now. The great thing is that it lets me load a video and write; I can use midi or standard notation, record live instruments, and I can sequence and mix all in the same program. In addition to this I use Kontakt as my main sampler. I use it to load various sample libraries from orchestral to ethnic instruments as well as custom samples I have created.

**ISM:** Do you reflect your Brazilian heritage in the music you place in your projects?

**DR:** Whenever possible I do try to draw on my Brazilian roots and utilize it in my writing. But this is not always the best approach. There are some projects that I can get away with it, and then there are projects where there is no place for it.

**ISM:** What is the most rewarding part of your job?

**DR:** The most rewarding part of my job is doing what I love and getting paid to do it.

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FILM AND TELEVISION ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT BEATS.





# The Rock

## With Ralph Cole Jr.

Interview By: Christopher D. Parker

**ISM:** How did you get your start in the entertainment industry?

**RCJ:** I was born to perform. Because of my parent's wonderful support, I was enabled to be steered toward the entertainment industry from an early age.

**ISM:** What is your favorite genre of film to work in?

**RCJ:** Multi-camera sitcom!

**ISM:** How challenging was it to work on Cold Case?

**RCJ:** Fortunately, I glided seamlessly into my role of Cherry LeSure. Everyone involved made me feel welcome from the start, so I was completely comfortable for the entire process.

**ISM:** During your time working on Two and a Half Men, did you interact with Charlie Sheen?

**RCJ:** We worked opposite each other and he was wonderful to work with! We laughed so much with each other.

**ISM:** Do you suggest changes about your characters with the directors, or do always play the part as it is written?

**RCJ:** I always begin with how it is written. Then, as we are able to explore deeper into our characters, I feel comfortable to discuss options with my director during the rehearsal and discovery process.

**ISM:** Who is your favorite director that you have worked with?

**RCJ:** Every director I have worked with is my favorite!

**ISM:** If you could work with any director in the world, who would it be and why?

**RCJ:** Pedro Almodovar, because of his commitment to detail and precision of directorial craft.

**ISM:** How was it working with Vivica A. Fox & Elise Neal on Lord All Men Can't Be Dogs?

**RCJ:** Phenomenally exceptional, since I had been a fan of both of them for years!!!

**ISM:** What was your role on The Soloist?

**RCJ:** Enraged homeless man!

**ISM:** You won an NAACP award in a production which was produced by Michael Jackson and Robert DeNiro.

What does that award mean to you?

**RCJ:** It means that I was recognized for my contribution to a most glorious, imaginative production, created by the remarkable Larry Hart, and for which I will be eternally grateful.

**ISM:** You have acted in numerous plays, features, and television series. Which do you prefer?

**RCJ:** Multi-camera network union sitcom!!

**ISM:** Any advice you would give to aspiring actors?

**RCJ:** If you are passionate about your dream, go for it wholeheartedly. But only if you are passionate!

**ISM:** Can you tell us about your film K-11 and your role in the film?

**RCJ:** It is a gritty prison drama where I play an inmate determined to survive in the horrendous predicament. I play Kay-Kay and I am fierce.

**ISM:** You just finished filming the film How Sweet It Is. Can you tell us about the movie and your role?

**RCJ:** It is a mafia-themed film. I play Indigo, and I am seeking the pharmacist who administered bad drugs to me! It is a musical. I am thrilled!

FILM AND TELEVISION ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT BEATS.





# Making A Movie From Start To Finish: Advice From Vet- eran Film Producer

By: Christine Conradt



Pierre David, the producer of 140 films and member of the Independent Film & Television Alliance Board of Directors, explains how to get your first film financed, produced and distributed.

I'm sitting in one of the stately conference rooms at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills. To my right, one of the producers of *The Last First Comic*, a documentary about 98-year-old Irv Benson, who started his career as a comedian back with Johnny Carson in 1962, and seated to my left, a fresh faced freelance writer, who after seeing the first screenplay he sold completely gutted, dissected and reformed into something unrecognizable, the result which I endearingly refer to as a "Frankenscript", decided to take control of the process and learn how to produce scripts himself.

And then there's me. I've made a career of writing indie films and made-for-television movies; 39 produced films so far. I've dabbled in producing, and even directed second unit on one of my films, yet today I'm stepping out of my behind-the-keyboard comfort zone and listening to writer/director/producer/actor/horror icon Eli Roth inspire the group with tales of how an overweight kid dissed at his own bar mitzvah landed the career most of us would chop off our right arms to have. He is the ideal choice for keynote speaker at this year's Independent Film & Television Alliance [IFTA] Production Conference on "New Avenues to Finance, Produce and Distribute Films at Any Budget Level." He's the man behind some of horror's most memorable (and successful) films: *Cabin Fever*, *Hostel*, *The Last Exorcism*, and the highly anticipated *Hemlock Grove* of which he's serving as EP.

As I look around the room at the 300 vastly diverse writers, producers, actors, directors and distributors in attendance, it's evident that we all have one thing in common; we all want to know how to finance our films and how to ensure a profit. "Your first film has to make money," Roth tells the audience, and then goes on to describe some of the more creative ways he's acquired financing... like positioning himself in front of a three-story banner of himself and Brad Pitt from the set of *Inglourious Basterds* when he was attempting to secure financing for *The Last Exorcism* at Cannes. Unfortunately, not all of us have photos of ourselves with half of the "Brangelina" power couple. So what about us? What can the rest of us do to finance our passion projects, get them produced, and most importantly obtain distribution so that someone will actually see them?

I decide to go to the source to ask those very questions. By the source, I don't mean Eli Roth, I mean IFTA Pro-

ducers Committee Chairman Pierre David. David has produced more than 140 films ranging from cult classics like; Cronenberg's *Scanners*, Zalman King's *Body Language*, Figgis' *Internal Affairs* starring Richard Gere, and Oliver Stone's *Platoon*, in which David was credited as production executive. I sat down with David and asked him to walk me through the process of successfully financing, producing and then selling an indie film. His advice was invaluable.

"It all boils down to concept and execution. Concept means marketability, marketplace acceptance, and the key—which is originality. People have to say 'that's a new take on that genre' in the way people talked about the first *Saw*. The biggest pitfall is that producers have the ability to make a movie cheaply, but they don't make the right movie, and no one wants to see it. Talk to people, ask questions, check what's coming out, figure out what's hot, and then make a film that fits bulls eye center into that category. Or, take a bigger risk and make something that's so original and interesting, it doesn't matter if it bucks the trend. Not many people can make a movie for almost nothing and buck the trend, but those that have, ended up with a much bigger reward."

That's what you should do. Either make a great, original film; or make something that everyone's buying. Check. Now what shouldn't you do? Let's say you've got that incredibly original, well-written script, or the perfect little twist on today's hottest trend. What kind of mistakes do producers make that ultimately prevent that coveted sale? "One of the biggest mistakes producers make is that they attempt too much for their budget and end up with something that looks cheap and low budget. Don't make an action film for \$300,000 when it needed one million or even ten million. The second biggest mistake is making a movie that's too short. An eighty page script, the movie barely makes 78 minutes and you wish you could cut ten minutes of stuff that slows the pacing down. Start with a script that's long enough, that once the film is edited properly, there's a real movie there. Last, choose the right title. The title is so important. It's important for DVD, VOD and marketing foreign—a good, catchy title is critical." David notes that *Gangsters, Guns, and Zombies* is a perfect example, "I knew exactly what the film was before I ever saw it."

Okay, let's say we've got a script that's topical, the right length, and it has an unforgettable title. How do we raise the money to actually put it on film? One of the conference panelists, Adam Chapnick from IndieGoGo.com, has a crowdfunding site that allows filmmakers to sell perks

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like posters and DVDs and dinners with the cast to anyone willing to donate money toward their film. When I asked Pierre David his thoughts on financing, he said that for lower budget levels a combination of crowdfunding, small investments from personal friends and finding a cast and crew that's willing to work on a deferred basis are the best ways to go.

“At the \$150,000 budget level, forget presales. Unless you have the rights to remake a popular film, a novice producer isn't going to get funding through presales to the foreign market. That leaves private equity and crowdfunding. If it were me, at this budget level, I would do everything in the world I could do to avoid private equity investors. You

may not sell it right away. They may hang on to it and sell it when the time is right, when the market is right. That way no one is touching the equity. It's an advance, you recoup it from the foreign sales, and then if the movie does make money you keep it all. You're better off getting a little money here and there from friends, parents, or whoever, and keep ownership of the film, instead of going to a private investor who may end up taking all your profits. And then you've done the whole thing for nothing.”

Good advice, I think, as David reiterates in his own way Eli Roth's mandate that your film must make money. After all, this is a business before it's anything else. But then what? What do you do after you've found that willing



have to realize you're going to put blood, sweat and tears in making your film for months, if not a year. Then someone is going to invest \$25,000 or \$50,000, and if they are smart, they are going to probably want 50% of the profits for not risking that much money and pretty much doing nothing. You're better off giving away bits of the profit to your friend who's a great DP, and your other friend who's a composer, and keeping the ownership of what you're going to struggle for yourself. Or, go and find a foreign sales agent that will guarantee you say \$25,000 if your movie's \$50,000. Sales agents have the cash to give you, and they

crew, raised the cash by selling a vast array of perks, and promised your parents they'll never have to buy you another birthday gift for the rest of your life if they just help you finance this film?

Answer: You take the piggy to market. If you've done it right, hopefully someone will want to buy it. Or, maybe multiple people will want to buy it. But how do you know which deal to take?

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# The Asset

## With Karin Chien

Interview By: Christopher Parker

**ISM:** How did you get your start in the entertainment industry?

**KC:** Like most folks, I started by working for free. I moved myself to NYC and combed the intern listings. At the time I was 22, and working as the operations manager of a startup due diligence firm for securitizations. After I quit it took a month to find an unpaid internship on a film production. That is when I realized how competitive the film industry was! My first job was to sweep the floors and take out the trash. But I worked diligently, and by the end of the film I had become the production secretary, the art department coordinator, and the production accountant! After that I was hired to be an assistant coordinator, and I worked my way up into producing.

**ISM:** You have produced over fifteen feature films and shorts, which is your favorite?

**KC:** Each one is the sum total of the experiences I had producing the film. So when I see the film, I see the friends I made, the travels I had, and the two to five years of my life that the film production covered. Each one was transformational in its own way.

**ISM:** When and why did you form Marakesh Films?

**KC:** Marakesh Films is actually the production company of the director of *Circumstance*, Maryam Keshavarz. For each film I form a new company for liability protection, so right now I'm managing eight companies, including a video production company (*I love 2*), and a distribution company (dGenerate Films).

**ISM:** What is dGenerate Films' main goal in the marketplace?

**KC:** dGenerate Films' mission is to bring independent, uncensored cinema from mainland China to North America. We distribute the best of groundbreaking films coming out of China. Our mission is also to grow the audience for

contemporary Chinese independent cinema.

**ISM:** How does your Chinese culture play a part in your filmmaking?

**KC:** In most ways it doesn't. I was born and raised in LA, and more than anything I'm very Southern Californian! But because I was raised in an insular Chinese-American culture (San Gabriel Valley), I had no exposure to the entertainment industry of LA, and I actually went into filmmaking blind, not knowing a single soul. But I've always seen my Chinese heritage as an asset. The Asian-American film community has been a supportive base from which I have grown as a producer. Without my Chinese heritage, I could never pull off our work at dGenerate Films. I also spent the first five years of my producing career working on Asian-American films to increase our representation in mainstream media.

**ISM:** China has become the fastest growing film market in the world. Do you believe the perception of China and its' filmmakers has changed in the western world?

**KC:** I hope that the work we do at dGenerate Films has helped to change that perception. Several of our films make it onto the "Best of the Year" lists from American critics. European audiences and critics have been more willing to embrace Chinese independent cinema than the US, maybe because the storytelling aesthetics are closer, or Europe is used to watching cinema from other countries. My hope is more American audiences will soon discover the groundbreaking cinema they are missing out on.

**ISM:** Your feature film *Circumstance* caused quite a bit of controversy with the Producers Guild. Do you believe their English language rule unfairly excludes quality foreign films?

THE ASIAN- AMERICAN FILM COMMUNITY HAS BEEN A SUPPORTIVE BASE FROM WHICH I HAVE GROWN AS A PRODUCER.



**KC:** Here is the misperception; Circumstance is not a foreign film. It is an American film with foreign language dialogue. It premiered in the U.S. Dramatic section of Sundance, and even won the audience award for the U.S. section. So the PGA excluded an American film from award eligibility because the dialogue was not in English. What they are doing could be called xenophobic, it is eerily similar to Arizona's attempt to make English the only language allowed in schools. There is also a double standard at the PGA. In the Land of Blood and Honey, directed by Angelina Jolie, was released in a foreign language, and the PGA gave the film an award. The rules just don't make sense. I wrote my letter to the PGA after I made several failed attempts to get an explanation from the PGA directly. No one responded to me until my open letter.

**ISM:** Why do you believe it is so hard for Independent filmmakers to gain financing for their projects, and how have you been so successful at raising funds?

**KC:** It is hard because it is an incredibly high risk. There is a huge risk that the film will never come together, be finished, and then be sold. On average 2% of films submitted to Sundance are accepted, and 20% of films at Sundance are sold to a distributor. That means less than half of one percent of independent films made each year are actually sold at Sundance. The number of films that actually make their money back is much lower. So, if this is the independent film business model, then getting into Sundance or another A-list festival and selling for a high advance to a distributor, then it is not the most attractive business model for most investors. Our mistake right now, as independent filmmakers, is to continue to perpetuate this model. This is a model for the top 1% of independent films. The rest of us, the 99%, should realize that the key to financing, producing, selling and distributing independent films today is to build an audience base. Developing an audience base gives you leverage, and ultimately independence.

**ISM:** What elements do you look for in a film that will catch your attention when considering producing?

**KC:** Brilliant writing, strong vision, and an honest voice about human experience.

**ISM:** What is the most rewarding part of your job?

**KC:** Watching a film with an audience for the first time, bringing exposure to previously untold stories, and working with brilliant and talented people.



**ISM:** Where do you see yourself within the industry in ten years?

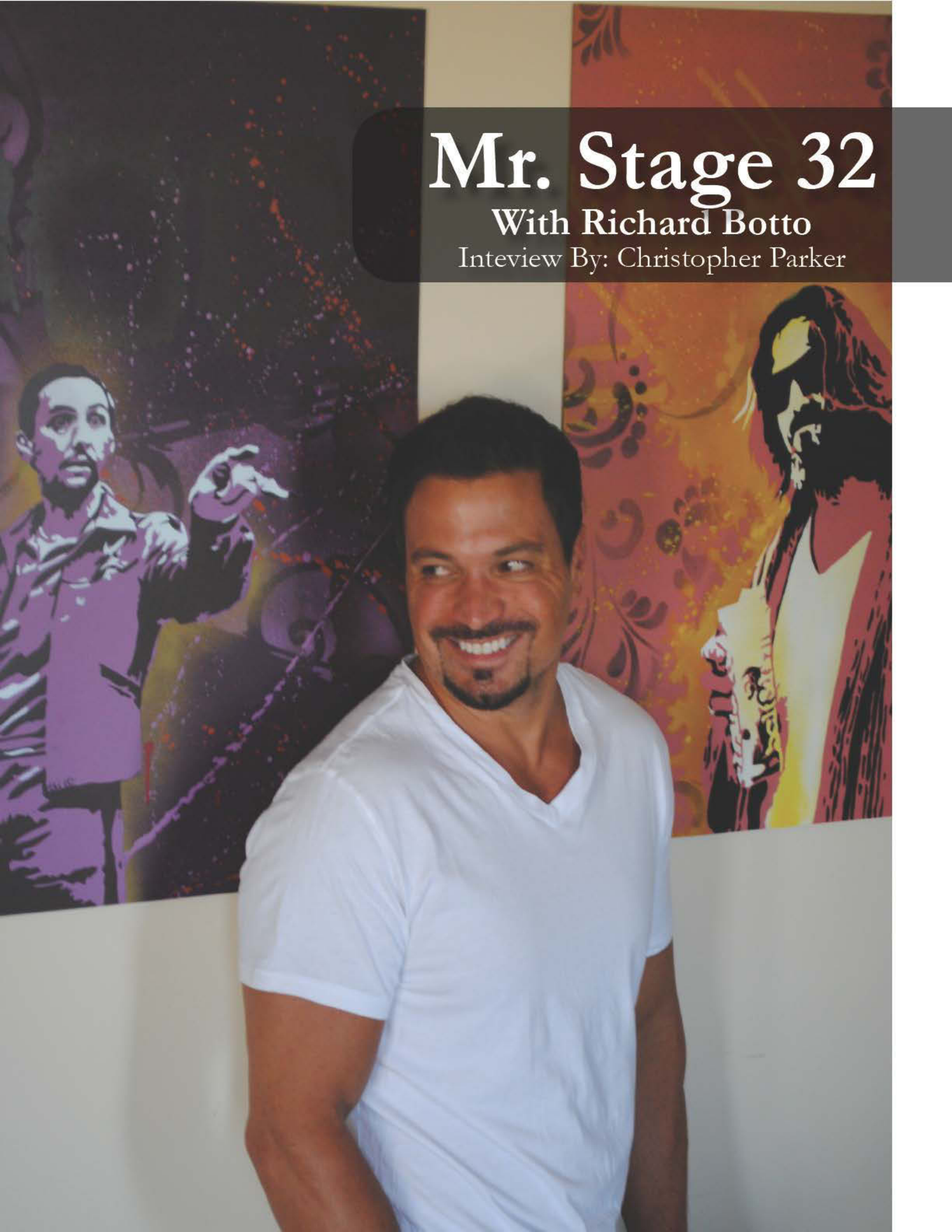
**KC:** First, no one knows where the industry will be in ten years! I still see myself supporting unknown talent, and risk-taking storytelling from around the world.

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# Mr. Stage 32

With Richard Botto

Interview By: Christopher Parker



**ISM:** When was Stage32.com created?

**RB:** The very basic idea of the site was discussed as far back as the Fall of 2009. We took a year for research and to explore what we wanted included in the initial product. As with any startup, as you go into planning, there is an evolutionary process within which fantastic ideas rise to the surface, taking the original concept into broader, more ambitious territory. At some point, you have to pick your features and get into development. For us, that point happened in early 2011. We went into beta in August, and we officially launched the site on September 1, 2011.

**ISM:** What are you trying to achieve with Stage32.com?

**RB:** A few different things. The base idea was to create an environment where film, television, and theater creatives would have the opportunity to network 24/7/365 regardless of their geographical location. That was the ground floor idea. We felt the broader social networks did not, and do not, serve the creative community in any consistent or sustainable fashion. As we began to blueprint, and part of that process was to ask what we, as creatives ourselves, wanted to see in the site, I coined a motto of sorts that served as the framework for all additional planning: Concept to Completion. The goal was and remains to build a site where anyone with an idea could see that idea through from conception through a finished project. That meant the site needed not only to connect people, but to provide educational tools and resources. Over the next few months, the community will discover through new features that our scope has broadened even further. But the ultimate goals will always remain the same: to connect, to educate, to inform, and to increase the odds of success.

**ISM:** Can you tell our readers what your job as a Creative Executive entails?

**RB:** In a word, everything. I think if you asked the CEO of any startup, he or she would have the same answer. We have a very small staff, and that requires all hands on deck all the time. It also means that you perform tasks outside of your job description. Grunt work. Ideally, as a CEO, I would spend my days developing strategy, delegating responsibility, and overseeing progress. Ultimately, 95% of all non-programming related projects and initiatives, I delegate to myself. But I love every minute of it, and observing or hearing from a member of the community who has found success through the site, something that has become a daily occurrence, serves as the reward for all the hard work.

**ISM:** Bringing creative people together globally is a great

achievement. Do you know of any productions that have been created using your site as the means of meeting and collaborating?

**RB:** First off, thank you. I appreciate the statement. Yes, we know of at least seven directors or producers who have put together films using nothing but Stage 32 members: cast, crew, and post production personnel. There have been hundreds of other examples where filmmakers or theater producers have found the final pieces of the puzzle toward getting their project off the ground through the site. And, of course, thousands have found work through 32. It's been an incredibly rewarding experience.

**ISM:** You recently produced a film titled Another Happy Day, could you tell us about this film and your exact role?

**RB:** Sure. Another Happy Day was written by Sam Levinson, son of Barry Levinson, when he was 23 years old. The script floated around for a few years until Ellen Barkin discovered it and decided to attach herself as a producer,



and agreed to play the lead role. I signed on as an associate producer during the pre-production phase when Demi Moore, Thomas Hayden Church, and Kate Bosworth were added to the cast. The film debuted at Sundance in 2011, and Sam's script won Best Screenplay. The film is fantastic. Sam did a hell of a job directing. It deserved a better theatrical fate, but it's had a very nice life on DVD and On Demand. I'm very proud to have been involved.

**ISM:** Do you have any plans to produce feature films in

the future?

**RB:** Absolutely. I am in discussions with a couple of companies regarding having them serve as co-producers on two of my scripts. There is another project I am attached to as a producer which I'm extremely excited about. We are early in the game, but it is a project I believe has widespread appeal.

**ISM:** How does Stage32.com tailor to its' foreign users that may speak a different language other than English?

**RB:** Currently, the site is only available in English. We do have plans down the road to introduce other languages.

**ISM:** What is the most rewarding part of your job?

**RB:** Without question, watching your various initiatives take root and bear fruit. Nothing makes me happier, gives

**RB:** Well, from the producing end I would say financing, but that has always been a difficult aspect. Crowdfunding, to an extent has made things a bit easier, at least for those looking to create a calling card, or a stepping stone toward bigger things.

For screenwriters, I think the tentpole, remake mentality of the studios has poisoned the water. Managers and agents who normally would sign a writer with a great, but unmarketable script, which is purely based on potential, these days are mostly only interested in concept. You may have the next Casablanca, but they only want the next Transformers. Again, to turn that into a positive, as distribution channels continue to evolve and multiply the need for content will continue to increase. There are plenty of independent production companies still interested in character driven films.

Theatrical distribution is a nightmare as well these days, but we would be here all day if I got started on that.

**ISM:** When it comes to financing feature films, what do you think could be done differently/better?

**RB:** I'm not sure if anything can be done differently. If you are trying to raise money through private investment, you need to bring something sexy to the table. A great script

isn't going to cut it. You need star attachments, maybe a director commitment. There's a whole chicken and egg conundrum that has existed forever as it relates to raising funds for a film. Should we first raise capital, and then go after stars? Or can we get star commitments and then raise capital? But how can we get star commitments if we have no capital? It is a delicate balance to be sure. It requires patience and constant massaging, but it can be done.

As for crowdsourcing, the biggest mistake people make is thinking their idea is "the be all, and end all". I call it the "If You Build It They Will Come" mentality. Wrong. It's

not enough to be a creative genius, you need to be a business and marketing guru as well. You need to know how

Continue pg. 40

me a bigger high, than hearing from someone who has found success through the site. Knowing you are playing a part in making a person's dream come true, there is nothing more rewarding and fulfilling than that.

**ISM:** Where do you see yourself within the industry in ten years?

**RB:** Acting, writing, producing, and maybe directing. Sustainability in this industry requires a commitment to quality, but it also requires success. One you can control, the other only marginally so. The goal is to be involved with projects I believe in. Sometimes, all you have is your judgment and your instincts. You put in the work, you release it to the wild, and you let the chips fall where they may.

**ISM:** In your opinion, what is the most difficult aspect of the industry right now?



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# All About the McKenzies

## With Samuell Benta

Interview By: Denise Smith

**ISM:** How did you get started in the entertainment industry?

**SB:** Well, I started to take acting seriously when I was about 19. I attended some drama workshops and got signed to an agency. My first role was on a British police drama called *The Bill*, and I only had three lines!

**ISM:** You were Will Aston (the Black Overdrive Ranger) in the *Power Rangers Operation Overdrive* television series. How was that experience?

**SB:** Whoa, where do I start? I remember in 2006 when I got a call from my agent about the audition, and I was shocked! I didn't even know that *Power Rangers* still existed! There were two auditions, and I had had boxing experience prior to the audition, which worked. It was a funny audition process. I had to use

an American accent and show them some fighting moves! Little did I know that two weeks later I would be flying out to New Zealand and be there for a total of 7.5 months! That was a long time away from home, and believe me I was home sick. I had never lived away from family before, so it was a bit emotional. I had to learn some real life skills out there, such as cooking and cleaning. I remember asking my mum to email me some recipes. All I can say is now I can make a really good lasagna and spaghetti bolognaise! This was my first lead role professionally, and the nature of the work was very physically demanding. The scenery of New Zealand is absolutely amazing and the people are wonderful! I would definitely go there again. If you want heat, then that is the place to be, as they are right near the equator!

CASTING WAS FUN, BUT CHALLENGING, AS I CAME ACROSS SOME GOOD ACTORS, BUT SAW A DIFFERENT SIDE TO IT THAT WOULD WORK FOR ME AS AN ACTOR

**ISM:** Your background is in acting as well as filmmaking; have you found that you enjoy one side of the camera more than the other?

**SB:** It's funny. I have always loved acting, but ever since I had the idea of writing my own show, I discovered new

talents within me. I rap under the alias, "Myster?ous" (yes the question mark is meant to be there), so writing wasn't a new skill, I just had to do a bit of research to know how to write a script. I think it's fair to say that when you are the creator of your own show and have more creative control over it, you enjoy being behind the camera more. To be honest, it wasn't my intention to write, direct and produce. I kind of discovered it within me. Acting will always be the winner though, as my dream is to be the next box office king. The steps I make now are my stepping stones to getting there, so yeah acting would be my preference.

**ISM:** You created a web series titled, *All About the McKenzies*. How did you come up with the story?

**SB:** I just wanted to say to everyone to never judge or complain about a situation in your life that gets you down, it can be turned around and used as a positive experience. *All About The McKenzies* is a family sitcom, and was conceived in my mind during December 2010. I was going through a rough relationship at the time, and instead of going crazy I put a twist on it and told myself that if I was going to go through a rough time, I would see gold come out of it! So, it all started with a piece of paper and brainstorming characters with a very close friend of mine. I grew up on American shows in the 90's such as, *Kenan and Kel*, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, *Sister Sister*, *Moesha*, *Eve*, *The Parkers*, *One on One*, and *Cousin Skeeter* (too many to mention). In the UK we don't really have black family oriented shows for "political" reasons, we did have a few, but they were years apart from each other and they didn't sustain. I set out on a mission to find out why, and decided to combine my current situation with the statistics of the past, using what had worked with American shows, and figuring out a way to create a winning show, not just any show. I wanted it to be issue based where viewers could see the struggles,



laugh and want more. Originally, I never planned on doing a web-series. I created All About The McKenzies for TV, I had worked my butt off writing episodes that were equivalent to 30 minutes. However, when I flew out to LA to the Hollywood Black Film Festival 2011, I was introduced to web series. I never really knew web series existed until I flew out there!

**ISM:** How many seasons have been shot?

**SB:** I have only shot one season so far, but in my mind I'm creating a second.

**ISM:** In your web series, All About the McKenzies, you were the writer, director, producer and one of the actors. What challenges did you encounter wearing so many hats?

**SB:** Where do I start?! Let's just say the worst challenge I had to overcome was filming a whole pilot episode in Mar/Apr 2011 and having all my footage stolen! Yes for seven and a half months I had no show. I was gutted, had no idea of what to do, and felt like my dream was crushed. It was only when I went to the HBFF where the idea of a web series came across my mind. So, when I got back to the UK I had to figure out how on earth I was going to squeeze 8 x 30 minute episodes into 8 x 5-7 minute webisodes. It was January 2012, and I was re-writing specifically for the LA Web Festival 2012, I had to meet the festival requirements, and still come up with a good show. Casting was fun, but challenging, as I came across some good actors, but saw a different side to it that would work for me as an actor if I were to walk into a casting room. If you have ever had to do a production schedule then you will know that organizational skills are a must. I had never done one before, but I had a rough idea how to from remembering certain schedules from productions I had worked on while acting. The whole show was funded out my own pocket, it wasn't a large fund, just about £600, which is equivalent to the US dollar of \$1100. The actors and some crewmembers did the job for free, and the locations were free...talk about using all of your resources to make something work!

**ISM:** Your web series, All About the McKenzies was selected to be included in the LA Web Fest 2012. What was that experience like?

**SB:** I was excited! I was happy that all the hard work was appreciated. I managed to submit my show two days before the deadline. After all the challenges, I said to myself, "This WILL BE ACCEPTED, NO MATTER WHAT!" And it was! I flew out to LA not knowing anybody, but I left with friends whom I still talk to today. I know networking is important, so I made sure I utilized my time over there to get to know people because you never know when you may need that person's help and vice versa. I felt a bit

saddened at the award ceremony when all the categories were being announced and I wasn't hearing my show. I felt like I failed, but then when my show was mentioned to win "Outstanding Achievement for Great Ensemble Cast in a Comedy", I was relieved and felt that all the madness was worth it! There was only myself and a talented young lady from London there and it was shocking... where is the UK at?!

**ISM:** Now that you have received worldwide recognition for All About the McKenzies, where do you see the series going in the future?

**SB:** I see it being an international success for television. The vision I have for the show is beyond the short web series, the web series was not only the beginning of the show, but the beginning of me, my contribution to society, my service to show and share with everybody all the skills and talents I have. I have other ideas for shows, films and kid's cartoons. This show has probably been the only thing in my life I have stuck with through thick and thin, and I am determined to see the fruits of all my actions! Right now I am tweaking the 'TV series' scripts and using the web series as a pilot to show networks. I still stand by my own integrity, as I must remain true to my story, but open-minded so I can work as a team.

**ISM:** Can you share with us the state of independent filmmaking in the UK (difficulties, challenges, etc.)?

**SB:** Filmmaking, I would say is still quite new to me here because All About The McKenzies was my first project. What I have observed though is that a lot of people here in the UK like to keep themselves to themselves and stick to their circles of people and not want to share the knowledge. I see the game playing, but I have my own universal agenda as I do not live in fear. I believe in abundance where there is enough opportunity for all.

**ISM:** Do you have advice you would like to share with up and coming actors or filmmakers?

**SB:** Don't wait, Create!

Watch All About The McKenzies on:  
[www.youtube.com/allaboutthemckenzies](http://www.youtube.com/allaboutthemckenzies)

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# KENZIES

ECTED BY SAMUEL BENTA





# Denmark DP

## With Malte Greis

Interview By: Christopher D. Parker

**ISM:** How did you get your start in the entertainment industry?

**MG:** My entire family is in the creative business, acting, musicians, design, etc. First I started acting, but when my parents got their first video camera I used to pretend to make movies, but just for fun. In high school I got my own little camera, and ran around and shot when I could on field trips, parties, etc.

Then in the town where I lived a new film institute was formed known as Odense Filmværksted (Odense Film-workshop). Here I found my big interest for the field. We got a lot of courses, and I learned a lot from this. Because I didn't go to any film school, I started to apply to different film companies. Eventually, I got in to different companies as a freelancer.

**ISM:** How did you learn how to become a Cinematographer?

**MG:** Most of the stuff I know from filming I learned by myself, but also by taking a lot of courses online and offline. Going on the internet is a really good idea to get inspiration, but the only thing that can make you a better cinematographer is to go out and shoot something. Therefore, I went to make a lot of shorts, music videos, etc.

Being on bigger productions as an assistant has also given me a lot of tools to work with. I was an assistant on the American TV show *Amazing Race – Super Shady* (Copenhagen, Denmark), where I was assistant for the host camera and sound guy. Here I got some of the world's best TV guys to show me how they did their work and how I should use it.

**ISM:** What is the hardest part of your job?

**MG:** The hardest part is making your self known to the industry. A good network is the most important thing you can have.

But I also use things like my own webpage and facebook to make my self known to others, and to try to convince

them to hire me for their next job.

**ISM:** Do you like to control the camera crew from behind a monitor, or do you actually hold the camera and get the shoot yourself?

**MG:** Both, but mostly behind the camera. I want to be in control of the pictures and will be right in the action. For shoots where the camera doesn't move I will go to the monitor and let the assistant stand by the camera. Seeing the image on a bigger monitor can sometimes be more helpful to see if the light is just the way I want it to be.

**ISM:** You have produced a number of films, do you find producing harder than cinematography?

**MG:** Producing and cinematography are two very different sides of the film business. With producing you have to be on every step of the film; finding funds, crew, locations, etc. You will be more at the office than on the set, but it takes a lot of work.

As a cinematographer you “only” have to take care of a shooting plan together with the director, and get the style just right.

Therefore, producing is a harder job to do, but for me being a cinematographer is the most fun. But by combining these two I can be on the entire film, often in a position as an executive producer.

**ISM:** What is your mental process while preparing for a shoot?

**MG:** I always use a long time to figure out which pictures I want to do. Before filming, I spend a day where I do nothing and empty my head of thoughts. It is important that I am quite ready when we stand on the set that I have no things that bother me. Eventually I will always get on the set at least an hour before meeting time so I can walk



around and go through the day's shoot.

**ISM:** Which do you enjoy working on most; features, short films, commercials, or music videos?

**MG:** Fiction film is what I think is the best thing to do. Of course feature length is the biggest you can do, and really spend much time on, but the short film can sometimes be just as difficult and even harder to make. With short films, you have to tell much on shorter amount of time and it should look good. So you can use a really long time to prepare everything, and filming it all in just 2 days. Often on shorts no one is on the payroll, so you know that everyone on the team is doing this because they love it and not because it is just a job.

But overall a feature with a bigger budget is the most fun thing to do, because you can get some of the things you wouldn't be able to do.

**ISM:** Is it more difficult to light a documentary, opposed to a feature film or short film?

**MG:** Documentaries can usually do without light, and sometimes just a little in interviews. Fiction film is illuminated in a manner which forces the viewer to see the things you want, and hide the things you will not see.

**ISM:** What types of cameras do you like to use most?

**MG:** I grew up in the digital age, and have always been at the forefront of this technology. Since DSLR arrived, I was one of the first in Denmark who made movies with this technology. The problem with digital movies has been that it could not match the look a real film could provide. But after RED and Arri have made their latest range of cameras, I've been a big fan of it. RED and Arri are very similar to each other and can almost make the same picture. Personally I prefer the Arri, as it gives a slightly sharper picture and more detail than what RED can produce.

But when you make a short sometimes the budget wouldn't be enough to rent one of these, so a DSLR like Canon 5d Mark II or a Panasonic AG-AF is a great replacement.

Then again it depends on the project, if the look should be a low budget TV like look, then I would rather use something like a Panasonic P2.

**ISM:** What lights would you recommend to our readers?

**MG:** Arri has launched a new range of LED lights with variable color temperature. A lamp like this means you

can use fewer lamps because it can replace multiple lamps. When on a set it speeds up the process. KinoFlo is now also a regular part of the light on the headset. It's really good for close shots of actors and illustrates them with some soft light.

But always have a talk with your chief lighting before a shoot.

RED AND ARRI ARE VERY SIMILAR TO EACH OTHER AND CAN ALMOST MAKE THE SAME PICTURE.

**ISM:** What is the state of independent film in your homeland of Denmark?

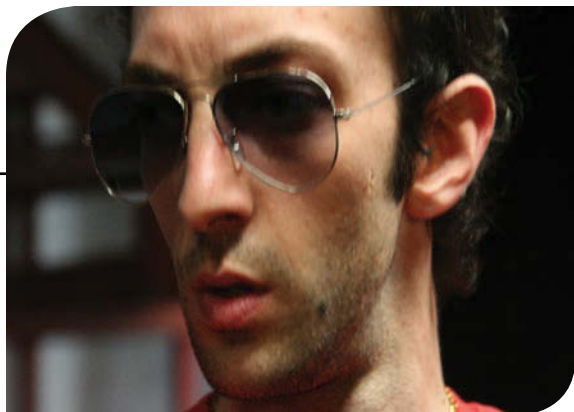
**MG:** There are many in Denmark who makes a lot of independent films. Most of them will focus on shorts for film festival. It's a business without enough money, so you have to focus more and more on the average day audience if you want to make some money. But there are fortunately many places where you can apply for money for a movie. The Danish Film Institute is a good helper, as both give money to big international movies such as Lars von Trier's *Melancholia*, but also helps up and coming people to make the movies they want to do.

**ISM:** Any advice you would give to aspiring Cinematographers?



phers?

**MG:** The best thing you can do is to get out and film a lot, and gather a large amount of experience. The more you've tried the more you can also offer others. It is better to come out and take a lot of pictures and learn how sun affects shadows, for example. It is also important to build a good and large network of people that you can use.



# Editing United

## With Francesco Caradonna

Interview By: Christopher D. Parker

**ISM:** How did you get your start in the entertainment industry?

**FC:** Well let's say it was unexpected. I was a photographer and filmmaker for an independent hip-hop musical label in Bologna, representing artists from New York and Bologna. I was getting my M.A. in Human Rights with a thesis course on Malcolm X when I won a tuition scholarship of one year in Film Editing and Cinematic Grammar to be attended in Milan, Italy. I started collaborating with the most interesting production and postproduction companies there, and it was love at first sight. I had the chance of learning from the most interesting editors in Milan where I worked on commercials, short films, documentaries, video art and a lot of different shapes of storytelling, as in Italy we learn how to be storytellers instead of how to push buttons on a keyboard.

**ISM:** What is it about feature film visual effects that attract you?

**FC:** The same thing that attracts me when I dive into a work of Caravaggio or Alberto Burri, or when I get lost into a masterpiece of Mario Giacomelli, Don McCullin or Nagy; the same things I felt when I watched Sergio Leone's movies with my father as a kid, or when we listened together to John Coltrane, Keith Jarrett and Miles Davis. You don't know what, you can't define it, but you know that it belongs to you from your testicles to your head. It's magic, another world, a ritual, a freedom, a bridge toward the unknown.

**ISM:** You are responsible for telling the story by how you edit. Do you find it difficult to cut one particular genre over another?

**FC:** I consider myself a storyteller, and as the sculptor Tarkovsky wrote in his diaries; the footage is my stone and I've just to find its hidden nature. So no matter the genre, what I have to do is to love that story, and the story will reveal itself being it a commercial, a feature film, or a feature documentary with hundreds of hours. Each genre has its own difficulties, and that is why this job is amaz-

ing, because every time you can discover something new, something you didn't expect from yourself and from the cinematic grammar.

**ISM:** Do you find yourself working more hand in hand with directors or alone?

**FC:** Well I am always open to new workflows depending on how the director feels about the story, but usually I work alone creating the structure of the film; then the director comes to the studio and we make tweaks together. It has always worked fine like this so far, and it is amazing to see directors and producers hug you after the screening of the first rough cut. You know, once the director has chosen you as their editor, they have already put their trust in you, so I guess that what they want is for you to tell their story in the most interesting way.

**ISM:** How early do you become involved in a project?

**FC:** I love to be involved from the beginning of a project. I think that the shooting is the last thing that a director does, so I need to know all the ideas behind a shot, behind a line of dialogue, behind a movement of the camera; I want to see references, I want to know what inspired them, whether it be books, movies, people, travels; I love to speak to them about everything that made them write that particular story, and I usually ask a lot of "Why this? Why that? What do you want to tell with this? How do you think this character should act here? Why this kind of lighting? What about this location?", and so on. Then being on set really helps me to better understand the story; I love watching directors direct actors, and I think it is important to listen to the director's comments and feelings on each shot and take notes and watch carefully, because that is when the shots get into life and the story is created and the magic starts.

**ISM:** What is your mental process for pre-





paring to edit a project?

**FC:** Well I do not have a process that I always use as a rule, because as I said each story and project is different, so I guess you need to be agile, flexible, ready to jeopardize your certitudes, being able to adapt to different situations like a plant or a wild animal does. Sometimes you have to be very well organized and scientific, sometimes you need to get lost in order to find the way. I never prevent myself from having new experiences. That's life, isn't it?

**ISM:** Do you enjoy editing features, short films, commercials, or music videos the most?

**FC:** If I love the story I enjoy the edit, but I have to admit that I prefer feature length films and documentaries. They will never die, because they make people dream and take a breath from reality. But commercials and music videos are pure fun, I love them, plus they are a great school of storytelling, because in such a short length you have to satisfy so many needs and tell so many things that you really learn how to make a choice. My job is to make decisions, and it is not easy when you have to cut a 30 second AD, and have 7 hours of footage. They have to be the right choices.

**ISM:** Do you find it difficult to edit documentaries?

**FC:** I love it. I love challenges, so I love feature documentaries. I locked the edit of *The Tempest* four months ago, and I remember the directors when they got in touch; they had a 70 minute cut, and I asked them to give me a month to re-edit it, and when I presented the first rough assemble they were so happy and shocked that they decided to take a month of extra shooting to implement in the new structure. We basically built a new story in post production, something like "post-screenplay". The world premiere will be in July and I cannot wait. Plus it was very difficult for me to get confident with Shakespeare's language (although I think he was Italian). Also, there were the riots out of my window in the streets of Hackney, London, and the connection was a flashlight, "This film has to be about how hard it is to get a chance as a teenager in South London". Now I am working on a new feature documentary that I have to lock by the end of June. I must say it is an h-bomb, but I cannot add anything else as I signed a confidentiality agreement. But stay tuned!

**ISM:** Have you ever cut a reality television project, and if so, how do you weed through hundreds of hours of footage to tell a story?

**FC:** Well I never worked on a reality television project, and I think I never will, although I dealt with hundreds of footage on two feature documentary projects, and I have to say that it is brain-consuming but beautiful, you know, especially if that footage is good footage. The main thing is to know your rushes frame by frame in the same way lions and leopards know their territory inch by inch. That

is half of the job, because when you are fully confident with your footage you can really build the story and a lot of alternative options just in your mind or through pictures on a wall.

**ISM:** You are currently in post on the feature film *Solito*; can you tell us how and when you were brought on the project?

**FC:** Well, the offline edit of *Solito* was locked a while ago.

**ISM:** Any advice you would give to aspiring Editors?

**FC:** Yes only two. First, use your ability as thinkers/seekers because this is what you are supposed to do, to tell a story. Secondly, don't stop watching films and asking yourself "Why? Why the camera was there? Why the lights

IF I LOVE THE STORY I ENJOY THE EDIT, BUT I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT I PREFER FEATURE LENGTH FILMS AND DOCUMENTARIES.



were there? Why that light is so cold? Why did the editor use this shot before that?" The best school for me was watching films and working with editors as a first assistant. This is not a job, this is pure love, devotion and abnegation.

A script doctor friend of mine called the other day to tell me about this Dickensian script someone had sent her. She said it was the best of story and the worst of writing, because it committed nearly every cardinal sin of screenwriting in just the first ten pages, and yet the producer she worked for was still offering a lot of money to buy it from the author. She was pulling her hair out in frustration as she struggled to turn all the meandering action lines and descriptions of non-visual and non-auditory experiences into a viable shooting script. For example, on the very first page, a character actually said, “I wonder what’s in this glass?”, while picking up the glass. Then moments later, as the character sniffed the contents of the glass, the writer actually described what the contents of the glass smelled like, apparently unaware that Smell-O-Vision cinematography hasn’t been invented yet. So, I asked her how this thing ever got optioned in the first place, and she replied, “You have to read the synopsis.”

So I did, and I was impressed. I mean I am no film scholar, but I know the feeling you get when you see a truly remarkable movie for the first time, and this story left me with that same feeling. It was like reading the synopsis for *The Matrix* or *The Sixth Sense* before seeing the films. It just had a really brilliant twist and an amazing theme, so good that I could picture lines forming outside movie theaters, fan sites springing up, t-shirts being made, political figures comparing their opponents to the antagonist in the story, and managers quoting the hero in business meetings. Of course, taste is subjective, and I am sure a lot of people still read that synopsis and passed without taking a look at the script. Nevertheless, the idea on which the story was based was actually quite good, and you could tell that from just the synopsis, because the synopsis told that story and nothing else.

You should know by now that over one hundred thousand scripts get registered each year between the WGAe, the WGAw, and the WGC, and you should also know that with so much material to choose from, producers don’t read scripts for the stories; they read scripts for the execution. In fact, I know some producers who only read spec scripts to figure out whether the budget will be within their means. That’s because as a producer friend of mine once said, “If you’re looking for a good story, it takes a lot of looking.” Any good independent producer knows that finding the right script is a numbers game, and any good producer will read a synopsis before opting to read a script. So if you want to tell your story, if you want to get your script read and considered, you necessarily have to write

a synopsis that works.

We cannot talk about writing the synopsis without talking about story structure, so let us first assume your script has all of these following elements or beats:



1. A description of the main character’s mundane world.
2. A main character with a driving need, and some personal shortcoming which keeps him or her from fulfilling that need.
3. An inciting incident.
4. Some sort of revelation or event which causes your main character to come up with and set a plan in motion.
5. An awesome antagonist who is going to do everything in his power to stop your hero from succeeding, and an ally or mentor who will help him or her succeed.
6. A point where your hero fails, yet learns something about him or herself in the process, and is able to rebound with a new plan.
7. A much more intense struggle or series of confrontations.
8. A final confrontation or battle where it appears your hero is losing.
9. A good explanation as to how your hero wins against all odds (perhaps some foreshadowing to set this up early in the story?)
10. Finally, your hero returns to the ordinary world, but he/she was changed by the journey and no longer suffers from the driving need he/she had at the onset.

I know there is a lot more to your screenplay than just these ten beats, but these are the basic story elements you need to summarize your story. Depending on your genre, you might need to include more than ten beats; for example, if you’re pitching a myth story, you might need to introduce a talisman (like when Obi Wan gives Luke his father’s light saber in *Star Wars*), or if you’re selling a Sci-Fi story you’ll have to explain the key technology and how it affects your story world (like the ability to predict a crime before it happens in *Minority Report*). So, do feel free to include more than ten beats in your list. But make sure you have at least the ten beats listed above.

Now this is my technique; when I write a synopsis I list all the beats first so I can check them off as I go along. Then, I try to write them all out while taking up as little space as possible. The end result usually winds up looking something like this:

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*Bobby Gyro always wanted something (need), but since he came from a limited background (mundane world), getting it was hard. When Matt Bagoy (antagonist) did something really appalling (inciting incident), Gyro knew he had to do something about it (plan).*

*He starts doing something (plan in motion), but it doesn't work out, and he gets desperate enough to break the law (revealing his shortcoming). His friend Allie (ally) keeps telling him he's doing the wrong thing, but he doesn't believe her until it is too late.*

*Arrested and imprisoned, Gyro comes up with a new plan. He sets it in motion, despite some difficulties, eventually going head-to-head with Bagoy, whose plan is still better. But Bagoy makes the same mistake that landed Gyro in prison, and Gyro is able to use this information (inner change) to win the great battle.*

*Gyro kicks Bagoy's ass, hooks up with the hot chick, and returns to his old town stronger and wiser than before (completed character arc).*

---

And that's it! Of course, you can do the checklist thing that I do, or you can just use the "synopsis" above as a template. But always remember, your synopsis should be short, brief and to the point. Ideally, a synopsis should take up about half a page; that way, if you're putting together a one-sheet, you will have room for a logline and a brief resume or bio. Or, if you're writing a query letter you will have room for a date, an address and a signature.

Here are a couple principles to keep in mind while writing a synopsis:

Keep it brief.

Do not leave out the ending. Remember that producers are looking for story first, and execution later; leaving off the ending is less likely to get them interested in the script and more likely to make you look like a "noob".

Do hint at the problems you solve in your script, but don't

solve them in the synopsis.

In fact, leave out any detail that does not tell the hero's story; dialogue, subplots, peripheral characters, and details like the type of gun do not belong in a synopsis. Unless that .357 snub-nose five-shot revolver is integral to your story in a way that a 9mm Beretta 92fs could never be, just call it a gun.

Use simple language. You want your reader to focus on your story, not your vocabulary.

So, how did that amazing synopsis I mentioned earlier manage to be so much better than the script? Honestly, I don't know. All I can say is that the writer managed to get his script read, considered, and eventually sold despite the fact that it read like a first draft by a first time writer, and he did this by writing a synopsis that hit all the major beats in the story without wasting any space on anything else. Ultimately, it takes a lot more than a good synopsis to sell a story, and I am sure he had other things going for him as well. But the good synopsis, in this and in many other instances, was by far the writer's most important selling tool.

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# Adobe Creative Suite 6 Production Premium and Vision Research Phantom Miro combine for fast, efficient filmmaking workflow

By Jim Geduldick

For years, I've worked in broadcast, music videos, and features, doing production and post-production and VFX. I'm also a 20-year veteran of skateboarding. Throughout my career, I've kept my passion for skateboarding, snowboarding, art, and technology ignited, and this has led me to work on some really cool projects, including the recent documentary *The Art of FLIGHT* featuring snowboarder Travis Rice.

So naturally I was stoked when AbelCine and Vision Research approached me to do a first-time test on the Phantom Miro M320 series high-speed camera, a new addition to the Phantom Miro lineup. I'd had an idea in my head for about a year or two about athletes in stressful situations and what it takes to progress each one's specialty, such as skateboarding, snowboarding, motocross, and so on. I decided to pursue the idea and create some great action sports footage for the new camera to show at the NAB show in April 2012. The project also served as a way for me to test out the camera with latest enhancements in Adobe Creative Suite 6 Production Premium software.

### Working with Adobe software

It may come as a surprise to some filmmakers, because I was a big Final Cut Pro user and had a popular blog on Apple's site, but I've been using Adobe Premiere Pro to edit footage for years. When Apple released Final Cut Pro X, it was sketchy on several must-have professional features. I stopped writing the blog and officially added Adobe Premiere Pro to my post-production workflow, which also includes industry tools such as Nuke, Cinema 4D, and a number of other applications.

At the time this project came along, I was already in the Adobe Premiere Pro CS6, After Effects CS6, and Speed-Grade CS6 prerelease programs, so I had the software teed

up for post-production. I did all the conforming, color correction, color grading, editing, and effects for the project with CS6 Production Premium.

### Catching the action

With the technology decisions for the project settled, I needed to figure out what and where I was going to shoot. I immediately thought of Camp Woodward in Pennsylvania, an action sports and digital media camp. I talked to my friend Dave Metty, who runs the Digital Media Camp and Woodward Films, about participating in the project and he gave an enthusiastic nod. Then I engaged BMXers Chad Kagy, Alistair Whitton, Zach Warden, and Steve McCann

and skateboarders Ben Hatchell and Kevin Tierney to participate in the Phantom Miro M series test.

So there I was, Phantom Miro Ms in hand, and—as is always the case—I had the trial-and-error challenges that come with learning any new camera or technology and making everything come out clean. On the shoot, the Miro's really performed. They have a super-lightweight, small form factor. The talent was even able to hold them while riding a skateboard. One consideration, though, was that the Miro's have smaller RAM options than some other cameras, so I had a little less legroom in planning shots. Thinking ahead was important.

Action-based stunts are typically done in a few seconds. With this in mind, I set up the Miro's in two ways: one was optimized to record

longer takes at between 640 to 800 frames per second (fps) and the other to allow multiple takes. Because the RAM buffer works in continuous loops, I didn't have to waste a lot of time. The Phantom's use a Post Trigger, whether it's a bail or a take, you don't have to stand by and trigger it manually. I stored the shots on a CineFlash drive, which made it easy to go straight from camera to computer.



## Perfecting in post

When it came to post-production, CS6 Production Premium really came through, especially because I work with a lot of high-end formats. For video editing, Adobe

Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects, using Dynamic Link if I needed to between the two programs, to stabilize any handheld footage.

As I typically do, I did a ton of visual effects work in After Effects CS6. Its new persistent disk cache means that I only have to re-render a section of a composite and then, if I make a change, I have the render cache available to me. That was a huge time-saver.

I also used Adobe SpeedGrade for color grading, and came away impressed. Adobe now has color-grading tools that can be used on set and in post as part of a truly professional video workflow. I've also started experimenting with Adobe Story CS6 to collaborate on scripts online, and the Adobe Creative Cloud so that I can tap into Adobe's tools from wherever I am on a mobile device.

## Embracing the future

For me, it is a genuinely exciting time to explore and field-test new technologies that are redefining the future for filmmakers and VFX artists. Companies like Adobe and Vision Research are continually upping the ante. The technology allows me to capture and do justice to what the determination and passion the riders and athletes do day in and day out. I am eager to get my hands on the latest innovations and engage in this new adventure, with technologies that impress me and push my creative limits every day.

It's like setting up a fresh new board and you're excited to go out and skate knowing you're going out to explore new a spot and try something you

have never done before. You grab some friends and push things in a new direction. You may stumble or the day may be a bust, but in the end a few seconds of it stand out and make the piece all worth the experience.

*About the author: Jim Geduldick is a cinematographer, editor, and visual effects (VFX) artist. He started his career in skateboarding and snowboarding as a sponsored rider, and then made the shift to cinematography, post-production, and visual effects.*



Premiere Pro CS6 continues to support the newest tapeless cameras and workflows, so I'm always confident it will be able to handle what I throw at it. That was definitely the case with the Phantom Miro.

Color support and the ability to maintain color accuracy in Adobe Premiere Pro CS6 throughout the project gave me really beautiful results. I used Warp Stabilizer in both

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# All About The Business

With Ivan Hronec

Interview By: Christopher D. Parker

**ISM:** How did you get your start in the entertainment industry?

**IH:** My start in the entertainment industry was almost 20 years ago, in the mid of 90's when commercial television in Central and Eastern Europe was launched. I got my first media job in television. One of the most active and the most successful investors in the East European media was Ronald Lauder's Central European Media Enterprises Group [CME]. Around 1993, CME invested in the Czech Republic's Nova television. They did not expect such an immediate success. Nova was a smash hit; from night to day they dominated the market. Viewers were hungry to get western kind of TV entertainment including films, actually, mainly films. Right after that the Czech republic CME decided to mirror the formula in other Central and Eastern European countries. Within two years they opened similar TV stations in Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine, Slovenia, and in Poland. In that time there were no experts on commercial television. The only source of qualified professionals were public broadcasters, film producers, or in general professionals from media or "culture" industry. However, experts from public broadcasters were trained in the "old system", all others in the non-media professions were without deep experiences from the commercial sector. I received my PhD in Musicology and Aesthetics from Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. In 1995, I was asked to supervise production at TV Markiza, a member of CME group. Subsequently, I was appointed as Head of Acquisition, and we successfully launched the first commercial TV in Slovakia. I learned my TV and film alphabet during that pioneering time. After two years, I was promoted to be a programming and acquisition consultant in CME programming services. I was based in Warszawa and helped them launch another successful TV project called TVN in Poland. Then, I was temporarily based in London, Romania, Slovenia and the Czech Republic, where I ran educational courses for TOP CME managers. In 2009, I received an interesting offer to build SPI International's Central European Operation. SPI is one of the most important buyers and distributors of independent feature

films in Europe, but in that time they did not have anything but a few suitcases of VHS with U.S. and European independent films that I sold to Free TV, and made some investment capital for distribution and then, production. We managed it and SPI International became the success story of the region. In 2009, I decided to sell my share in SPI and build up my own Film Europe; the first distribution and broadcast company that focused exclusively on development, distribution and broadcast of European films.

**ISM:** What types of films are you interested in producing?

**IH:** We are co-producing European films. Film Europe started with a few films in Czech Republic and Slovakia. Today, we are evaluating many projects from all over Europe. Feature films, as well as documentaries. However, our core business is not production. We see our co-production activities as an integral part of the Film Europe ecosystem of films in their full completion, where distribution, broadcast and even reflection contribute to production. All together the "cycle" of production, distribution, and broadcast activities create a unique Film Europe environment. We are a minority co-producer; in exchange Film Europe is holding part of the distribution rights. This is the way we are developing our library.

**ISM:** You are a teacher at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Why did you decide to become a teacher of management, communication and new media?

**IH:** I started to run courses in the Academy a few years before I joined media business. When we launched Markiza I thought that I would be forced to quit my lectures completely. I managed not to have to quit, and I am extremely happy to do so. Lecturing at the Academy offers two benefits. You are testing your ideas in front of cruelly independent students who do not care who you are and how much money you invest. They





will show you instantly whether you have something to say or not. By having this constant pool of opinions, I may test market campaigns for the films, or the coolness of the latest TV design from our up to date Film Europe applications. So my lectures are about what we as Film Europe are doing in the week before the lectures. Students love it. They are hungry to touch the practice, and if you add a bit of systematic contextual information and explain why you are doing things and what is the aim of the company within the media business in general, then you have them. The second reason is an investment into relationships with the future of the media industry. I have been lecturing on new media for almost 20 years. Many of my students are already matured and experienced; many of them are my colleagues in Film Europe Media Company. Many of them are working in other film distribution/production companies or in television. Some of them are working in London, Brussels or L.A., and lecturing was and is a two way process. If you are not giving and getting at the same time, there is something wrong.

**ISM:** How often do you teach your courses?

**IH:** On Monday in the afternoon, if I am in Bratislava. I am also having lectures in other schools and universities. I am also a frequent panelist, as well as speaker at many conferences. The reason I am doing it is exactly the same reason as lecturing at the school, I try to test Film Europe visions and ideas, and I am networking with other field professionals.

**ISM:** Why did you start FilmBox HD?

**IH:** FilmBoxHD was THE project, indeed. In 2007, we launched the first full HD film channel in Central and Eastern Europe. In that time FilmBoxHD was one of the first HD channels in the world, not just in Europe. The motivation was simple. We wanted to send a message that our company was a serious player. I remember comments coming from our competitors and the media. They were laughing at us and predicting that there was no market for HD. Within a year they started with their own HD project. But we were the first one, and since that time, the industry keeps an eye on us. Many cable and satellite operators have included FilmBoxHD and the rest of the FilmBox-Channels into their bouquet. Sometimes you have to push projects, which are close to insane just to prove that you are brave enough to do it. We are independent; we have to

be foolish, compared to the majors. They have the luxury to stay frozen. Majors, market leaders, are holding the position, and the last thing they want is the change. Pushing the changes is a mission of small, independent, brave and visionary companies.

**ISM:** What is the main focus of “Film Europe”?

**IH:** Film Europe is that kind of new ideas driven project. The reality is that European films are closely associated with grey socio-psychological low budget depression without real plot, camera and well-defined cast. Film Europe is about to prove that it is not true. We deliberately pick films from all 50 countries in Europe, not just from the strong filmmaking territories, such as France, UK, Spain or Germany. I am sure that many of you are surprised that Europe actually has 50 countries. Twenty-seven belong to EU, but in geographical Europe there are punctually 50 states with close to 50 official languages. Those countries have rich film history and the presence. You would be

surprised how many good films are produced in Europe. Actually, as far as quantity is concerned, more than 1300 per year are produced. The mission of Film Europe is presence and richness of European cinema. The point is that festival winners are just the tip of the iceberg. We are buying films from Albania, as well as the UK. The criterion is cinematographic quality. The film has to get the look, topic and has to communicate in genuine film language. We don't care about the cast, and sometimes not even the track record of the director. Film has to be innovative and interesting. One of the major differences between U.S. and European production is that Europe doesn't get

the star system as in the U.S. So we don't care what names are in the film. If there are some, then fine, if not, and the film looks good, no problem. All films are in original language with English and/or local language subtitles. The slogan of Film Europe is: “enjoy the sights and signs of Europe”. We are putting those films in the studio theaters, and we are working closely with the festivals. Then we release them on VOD. Film Europe is building its own VOD platform. Our main differentiator is that we are also a broadcaster. Film Europe Channel is the only channel most likely in the world which is exclusively programming films from Europe. Our scheduling and programming system is always the work of a trusted editor. European



films beg to be curated. Good but unknown films had to be presented individually. You should help them to be enjoyed and understood. So we are producing or buying an appropriate “metadata” such as film related documentaries, interviews, and other “rich content” which enhances the appetite of the viewer. Summing up, Film Europe is about the full ecosystem of European films. Our mission is to create, distribute, broadcast, reflect and popularize European films in Europe and abroad.

**ISM:** You are a renowned speaker; do you enjoy speaking to thousands of people at conferences and seminars around Europe?

**IH:** Yes, very much. The reason was explained already. I felt high satisfaction when during last year’s Cannes Film Festival, which is almost 600 professionals from all over the world, understood what Film Europe Media Company brings. Any single month there is some conference or event, and in the places I would not have expected. In July, I will be in Amman, Jordan, for instance. Film distributors from North Africa and the Mediterranean countries invited me to present Film Europe Channel. I feel that I

have something to say, and I feel that I need to constantly test the direction of our projects. Speaking is a must. You should be able to communicate what you want; otherwise even the best project cannot fly.

**ISM:** How hard is it in today’s climate for independent producers to raise capital for their projects in Europe?

**IH:** There are 1300 films produced in Eu-

rope per year. Seems that the financing is in place, doesn’t it? The problem of Europe is not scheme for production; our problem lies in distribution and marketing of already produced films. Europe is lacking a pan European distribution platform, not pan European production scheme. We have production already in place. There are many creative minds in Europe; there are many film supportive states or private schemes, which gave birth to a mountain of beautiful European films. Yet, the neighboring countries hardly know the films from each other. Usually in the theatrical

top 10 of the given country there are 5 from the U.S., four to five from the country, and zero or one from some other territory of Europe or the world. Europe, by principal of its limitation, cannot produce international blockbusters as major studios in the U.S. We must find our own way. The head attack on the multiplexes is hopeless. Film Europe should do it differently. Perhaps stress how many big U.S. film names originated in Europe. We all know the story of how poor European emigrants founded major U.S. studios, or better say, how poor East-European Emigrants managed to survive and found the new era. Perhaps we should sell European films as a model to survive as a genuine laboratory of the experiments. Look at the films Hollywood is producing. Schemes! Good oily machines of structural stories and archetypal Jung/Campbell characters. Rather sequels than something new. So the flag of innovation should be raised by independents, both in the U.S. and in Europe. Film Europe is, by principal, an independent company, which promotes independent cinemas, sooner or later, Europe, the U.S., and in the rest of the world. Raising the capital was, is, and will be hard. In the time of crises, in the time of conjunctures, we have to be creative and find a way.

**ISM:** You are co-founder of SPI International, a leading distributor. What types of films are SPI interested in bringing to the market?

**IH:** In 2010, I sold my shares back to SPI International. I do not feel that I should comment on SPI International’s current distribution, but I feel that without SPI that there would be no Film Europe. I learned a lot, and I have to thank Loni Farhi, President of SPI International. We worked together for almost 10 years. SPI started from scratch as a middleman concentrating on poor margin from the buying and selling of independent films. Now, it is one of the most important buyers, distributors and broadcasters of independent movies in Europe. I had a great time at SPI, and I am proud to be part of it. Yet, there is a time you have to decide whether you are going to be part of something you love, or you must stand up and walk your own way.

**ISM:** From a financier/producer standpoint, what genre’s do you feel are the best sell in the European market?

**IH:** The answer is simple. Big budgets, special effects, cast driven, well-structured Hollywood in the Multiplexes, and something completely different at the independent scene.

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# Adobe and Cannes Film Residency Program: Technology Meets Creativity

Provided By: Adobe, Inc.

Imagine spending a season in Paris, France, writing your dream screenplay, meeting with film producers and distributors at the world's finest film festivals and exchanging ideas with the world's brightest up-and-coming and respected artists from around the world.

Every year, 12 lucky filmmakers get to do exactly that through one of the Cannes Film Festival's residency programs, Cinéfondation. Participants in the Résidence du Festival are selected based on their previous work (short films or first long feature) and are judged by a panel of highly esteemed producers and distributors. For four and a half months, residents of Cinéfondation craft their scripts while using the best software tools on the market, including Adobe Story® Plus, a unique subscription-based script-writing and pre-production tool, which became part of the program this past May.

"To help aid in the creative process, we wanted to provide our residents with the most effective filmmaking tools available," said Cinéfondation Executive Director, George Goldenstern. "Adobe Story Plus will help these aspiring filmmakers plan their productions and collaborate with their team online; helping solve real world logistical issues."

Adobe Director of Product Development, Justin Cole, spoke about the collaboration with Cinéfondation. "It's more than just giving a respected institution access to software," he said. "We wanted these bright filmmakers to unleash their imagination while using a tool that is full-featured, collaborative and instrumental in the filmmaking process."

Cinéfondation's residency program also includes a series of forums with industry professionals and the opportunity to develop a portfolio that ultimately will be showcased to producers and distributors during appointments at international festivals including Rotterdam (Cinemart), Locarno (Open Doors), and, of course, Cannes. In addition, residents receive grants, free access to many Paris cinemas and European film festivals as well as optional French lessons.

In true Cannes style, the collaboration between the premier maker of film production tools and the premier film forum was celebrated with a glamorous mixer at the Palais des Festivals, overlooking the Cannes harbor. Guests included current Cinéfondation residents in Paris, along with directors from l'Atelier. Adobe Story Product Manager, Anubhav Rohatgi, who demonstrated Adobe Story Plus at the event, said, "It's exciting to be part of a

program that offers aspiring filmmakers a once in a lifetime opportunity, said Anubhav Rohatgi, senior product manager at Adobe. "Adobe Story Plus will help these artists accelerate the process of writing scripts and creating production schedules and reports for they can move on to filming and post-production."



As cinema evolves, Adobe and Cinéfondation's residency program hope to bring more fresh and independent voices to movie audiences everywhere.

## About this Year's Participants, From Cannes' Website:

### Jairo Boisier Olave

Jairo Boisier Olave made several short films, among which stand out *El nuevo* (The New Guy) and *Vestido* (Dressed), selected for Clermont-Ferrand and over 30 festivals around the world. In 2010, he wrote and directed *La Jubilada* (The Retiree), his first long feature film, winning the Work in Progress award at the Festival International de Belfort and getting his international premiere in Rotterdam. He's currently developing *Radiestesia*, his new long feature project.

### Alireza Khatami

Alireza Khatami worked in the film industry in Iran before immigrating to Malaysia, where he studied Creative Multimedia and worked as a Visual Effects supervisor. In 2010 his contingent journey took him to the United States where he studied Film Production. Currently he is developing his feature film project *Oblivion Verses* at the Cannes Residence. The project was selected for Script Station at the 62nd Berlinale and has the financial support of the Hubert Bals Fund from the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

### Juliana Rojas

Juliana Rojas and Marco Dutra have been working together since 1999. Their graduation short film *The White Sheet*

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# Pride

## With Chiko Mendez

Interview By: Christopher D. Parker

**ISM:** How did you get your start in the entertainment industry?

**CM:** Well, I had a few starts in different areas at certain times that all just came together not too long ago. As far as “entertainment” goes, I have been doing it ever since I can remember. I would jump into anything and everything that gave me a chance to perform; I just loved it. By the time I was 10; I had already taken lessons in trumpet and tap dancing, been in a school play, plucked a guitar without knowing how to play it, and sucked playing harmonica, but excelled in drawing. Yet, I was never really exposed to what we actually call “the industry”; that I’d bump into later. “Entertainment” was not something you just decided to do; it just happened and I didn’t know what that was. In Spanish it means “pass-time” or “hobby”, which was never taken seriously. But a “pass-time” is just what I needed at the time; other than school there was nothing else but to pass the time, so it was perfect because I enjoyed it. Now, to be an “entertainer” was too far beyond my knowledge at the time; it just wasn’t a career option or an attainable goal as a profession. Those that considered it were often ridiculed.

Now as far as the “industry”; it was not until I attended an “open mic” in a NY restaurant, that I got a good whiff of that. Every Monday night I did live Elvis impersonations with a 3-piece band, and later with instrumental tracks, but still these experiences were only in music and singing. I discovered the world of film years later when I submitted a demo song for a soundtrack and the director thought it was so appropriate he instead wanted to film me singing it with my guitar, so I wound up featured in the movie. And that was it for me; I got the bug. This is where I married the two, picture and song. I believe that is when I knew I had moved on to a more “professional” level, so I went full speed ahead. It panned out to be a monstrously creative love affair.

**ISM:** What is your favorite genre of film to work in?

**CM:** I love to have fun with comedy and action, which go

neck in neck for me. They both give me a chance to let my hair down, or be physical, but I would have to say drama; definitely drama. I connect more naturally with drama, it is where I can exercise emotion. All in all, I love the range these three give me.

**ISM:** You have worked on several episodes of SNL, can you tell us about this experience?

**CM:** Ah yes, the Showbiz Grande Explosion mariachi theme sketch. The feeling was incredible! It has now become an exceptional highlight in my TV beginnings. Being a long time SNL fan I often mumbled under my breath, “I’m going to be on that show some day,” and when I saw the casting for ‘Latino Musicians’ I immediately sent in my 8x10. According to the NBC casting director, my headshot was the first to land on his desk. He called me for a fitting and I was overwhelmed. When I was screened to enter the NBC building I knew this was something highly important not just as an artist, but also as a professional. As I stepped out of the elevator I walked down a corridor full of pictures hanging left and right of artists that hosted SNL; I was hypnotized. Meeting Lorne Michaels with a simple head-nod was as exciting as blocking the set with Fred Armisen, while Horatio Sanz would drive a motorized wheelchair into the set every 15 minutes, do a figure 8 around us and back out again with a big smile on his face, and bored out of his mind. On my first episode I grabbed the trumpet since I already play guitar and wanted to try something new. Colin Firth was hosting, but just watched him quietly. I did get to shoot the breeze with Colin Farrell when he played Bono on another episode, somewhere in between Bill Murray stopping by and pulling him away for a drink. By then the stage manager would say, “You know what to do Chiko.” I remember thinking, “Hmm, I guess that’s what being a regular is like.” With over 10 hours to kill between holding and wardrobe on each episode, I’d walk around the floor watching other artists like Hillary Swank testing cue cards, Avril Lavigne greeting family, Jimmy Fallon stumbling out of his dressing room from taking a nap, and John Heder getting ready for their act.

By the 5th or 6th episode I felt comfortable enough to talk to other guests like Snoop Dogg, and cast member Bill Hader, who was thrown in with us as a third mariachi musician, and the only one that said “Si”, after which the sketch was no more.

I had a blast during the sketch run; there were even rumors of making it a movie and I was asked to standby. I thought, “Holy @\$%”! Though it never did happen, I had already been blessed with one of my dreams coming true many times over; as I knew that for every end there was a new beginning. Next time I’m on SNL I plan to be hosting it.

**ISM:** How do you mentally prepare for a role?

**CM:** I use a few different techniques. One of my favorite challenges is to speak without words; just by a facial expression or an action, so I internalize a lot. My process begins with a scene, or as I like to call it a “situation”, and why am I there. Maintaining a vulnerable state allows me to flow with what is happening and most importantly react to what is happening. If nothing happens in the scene I can’t react, and for this I sometimes revert to method acting. It helps with externalizing those thoughts. Prior to filming I adopt as much of the character’s lifestyle as possible. The rest is to stay in his head for the length of the shoot or until the Director calls “cut”.

**ISM:** Do you suggest changes about your characters with the directors or do you always play the part as it is written?

**CM:** Frequently, yes. The common objective for both the Director and myself are to bring the script and character to life. So yes, I am frequently on the creative end because of my experience in writing, and performing in two languages. Sometimes an idea will come from that other side in Spanish, and when translated will work, and vice versa. Many times when filming in Spanish an English idea will pop into my head that may or may not work. But I try to remain focused on developing my character and always detect when that freedom is limited. I only make suggestions if something doesn’t seem to be working, or if I absolutely see something that works in my head. I cannot remember the last time a Director did not hear me out. I am very careful as to not override the chain of command, but concentrate more on doing what I can to film my scenes as efficiently as possible. The independence of filmmaking nowadays has facilitated the option to collaborate as a team. Perfect example; as I recently watched *Behind The Planet of The Apes* I caught a glimpse of Charlton Heston talking about how he did not want to be in the sequel, but without him it wouldn’t be a sequel, so Heston suggested to open the film and get killed im-

mediately, which was brilliant! My job as an actor is to ultimately make the Director say, “Cut, print”. As an artist my job is to be as realistic or believable as possible and to stimulate the audience’s emotion. When I am in that mode, thinking of 100 different ways to make that same Director happy seems easy. I’ve seen actors get upset when their suggestion is rejected, and that is not at all professional. As

a perfectionist; my constant thought is “Can we make this better?” and the answer is always the same...yes! In the end the Director has the option to use an idea or not, and if he does it can still wind up chopped in editing. The main objective is whatever works; to me it’s more of a creative collaboration.

THE COMMON OBJECTIVE FOR BOTH THE DIRECTOR AND MYSELF ARE TO BRING THE SCRIPT AND CHARACTER TO LIFE.

**ISM:** Who is your favorite director that you have worked with?

**CM:** Hmm...that’s a tough one. I have always been able to extract a constructive lesson from every Director I’ve worked with. I’ve also prematurely praised many directors for not giving me any direction at all; which later I’d realize was very wrong, but that is how you learn. As a serious actor you want to be directed as much as possible. Of course, this is all part of pushing the boundaries to get to that range. So, there is a favorite and there is a preferred, and in my book I have both; each of which have a quality the other does not, complementing each other to a tee. With that said, I’d prefer an indie director in the likes of Greg Haberny, who auditioned me about seven times before I got the part as Mr. X, a role where my face wasn’t shown at all, and had to pull it off with just body movements and voice; and to top it off, it was totally in Spanish! A triple challenge if you will. But as for my favorite, I’m still deciding since I’ve yet to work with many of them. I did however like the way Leon Ichaso directed me in *El Cantante*.

**ISM:** If you could work with any director in the world, who would it be and why?

**CM:** I would love to work with Frank Darabont! He has a unique storytelling style that is just compelling. As a movie buff I find all his characters memorable, and I never tire of his films. The feeling one gets from watching films like *Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile*, is exactly what the viewer should walk away with. I know I would undergo a creatively traumatic experience under his direction and would never be the same.

**ISM:** You are a songwriter; do you also play an instrument?

**CM:** Yes, my first percussive instrument was a “tambora”;

handmade out of two milk gallon containers, sliced and cupped together, but never thought of it as a professional drum since I couldn't afford to buy the real thing. I bought an old acoustic guitar without knowing how to play, and this became my permanent companion, even before I started singing. I grew tired of accompanying other singers and eventually found my own voice. When MIDI became popular I learned all the piano chords for sequencing, and later found an unknown affection for other percussive instruments like congas, cajon, guiro, guira, clave; all which I practice frequently. Though I'm a lyricist; always writing in verses or quatrains, these instruments are essential to arranging my songs from beginning to end.

**ISM:** Do you believe chemistry with your co-stars is important?

**CM:** Absolutely YES! I cannot tell you how many times I have had to carry a scene when there is nothing but a 2-dimensional cardboard cutout in front of you. I find a reaction to be more natural than a one-way delivery. I've had to sometimes resort to method, improv or adlib just to sugarcoat a scene or get out of a big mess. It's like a "music group", a backup singer going flat on a three part harmony makes the other singers sound off key. I mean you can get away with certain shots in editing, but I strive for 1000% realism, and having a connection with your co-stars is key, as you play off each other. Though it's important, it's not always necessary, and some casting directors just don't care. I at least, prefer it.

**ISM:** You were born in the Dominican Republic, but raised in New York. Do you believe the ability to speak English and Spanish helps you land roles?

**CM:** Absolutely! My upbringing put me in very difficult situations, where I had no choice but to study in both countries and learn both languages from the ground up. Yet, I was blessed to come out of it as the dual-performer I am today. This is now an extreme asset I exploit, as I am active in both the Spanish and English speaking markets. And by the way, I've worked with a few non-Spanish speaking directors who have already taken advantage of this.

**ISM:** How often do you work in the Dominican Republic?

**CM:** Not as often as I'd like, and from what I hear more and more productions are taking place there. I've been cast in many films shot in the USA that are screened in the DR and other countries. I have recorded music that is in rotation there as well. I've never had an exclusive agent, but I am in talks now with a few that are in the loop for projects being produced in the DR. Something I am looking forward to.

**ISM:** Any advice you would give to aspiring Actors of Dominican origin?

**CM:** Tons of it. I know it's not easy. There are a million things you can do; hell I'm still learning myself. Everything begins with a "decision". Our upbringing teaches us things that usually come in conflict with everything unconventional like the arts. First I'd advise to put yourself to the test with a few things, and with this comes a lot of homework. If you're passionate about performing it is certainly a start, but make no mistake; your artistic integrity will be tested, and you will have to make sacrifices along the way. Make sure it is NOT a hobby. Once you know for sure that it's what you want to do for the rest of your life, then you're pretty much married to it. Always strive to do better, and never think of how good you are...allow for experimentation, trust your instinct and believe in your voice. If there is any shred of doubt in your mind that at sometime you want to be either famous, rich or "make it" by a certain time, or by giving yourself a deadline, save yourself the trouble; quit now and do something else. Look all around you and see who else is doing it, and learn as much as you can from them, but if you see no one; now you know why it's not easy. Don't be afraid to try things on your own. Treat every project like it had a million dollar budget. Be true to it, persevere, accept rejection and develop your own style. If you're just new at this, then treat it as any career, and do your research, learn your A-B-C's and don't rush, because you have forever to do it right. Watch a lot of films, even cheesy ones. Study the scenes. No matter how tough things get, there is always a reason for it. Once that is solid, and you're sure "money" is not what drives you, things will happen eventually, and by then you'll know what your next move will be. You will have come a long way.

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## Adobe and Cannes Cont.

*from page 35*

(O lençol branco) was shown at festivals around the world, including Cannes Cinéfondation in 2005. Their second short A Stem (Um ramo) was selected for the Cannes Critics' Week in 2007 and won the Kodak Discovery Award for Best Short Film. Both are members of Filmes do Caixote, a group of young filmmakers working in constant collaboration.

### Jéro Yun

Jéro Yun began his studies in classical arts at the age of 13. After completing his arts studies at the Korean University he came to Paris to study Fine Arts at ENSAD. In 2008 he attended Le Fresnoy and directed one medium length

film *In The Dark* and a short film *Red Road*. Both films were selected for several international film festivals. In 2011 his documentary *Promesse* was awarded the Grand Prix Asiana International Short Film (South Korea).

### **Pasquale Marino**

Pasquale Marino studied in Rome at Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia where, between 2008 and 2011, he made several short films. Besides school work, he also directed the independent feature *La felicità non è allegra*, now in postproduction. His latest short (a degree film produced by the school with RAI Cinema – the cinema department of Italian public television), was selected at the 64th Festival de Cannes in the Cinéfondation section.

### **Simon Jaikiriuma Paetau**

Jaikiriuma Paetau's last short film, *Mila Caos*, was selected for Cannes' Director's Fortnight, MoMA New York, Rotterdam and many other International Film Festivals.

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## **Making A Movie Cont.**

*from page 11*

David has a few words of caution regarding the final step of the process...

“New producers often jump in and make the wrong deals because they don't have the experience to know that the deal isn't good and they don't want to miss their



opportunity. On the flip side, sometimes they do the opposite. They turn down good deals not realizing they're good because they're afraid of making the wrong deal and upsetting investors. They panic, refuse deals, and

end up sitting on their film for a year before they can sell it.”

Is that preventable? You hear all kinds of stories about producers that held out for the right deal and made a

boatload of cash; you also hear regrets when producers wait for something better and nothing comes along. In the end, if you can't rely on experience (because you have none), solicit advice from knowledgeable friends. Make those friends by networking at events like the IFTA conference. Ask questions and listen closely. Everyone there has had different experiences that may help guide you in the right direction. And then, at the end of the day, trust your gut. If you make it that far, you've already made some good decisions.

Christine Conrardt has written more than 40 indie films and television movies as diverse as *Hotel California*, *Summer's Moon*, *Accused at 17*, and *Ghetto Dawg 2: Out of the Pits*. She holds a BFA in screenwriting from the University of Southern California and a Masters of Criminal Justice from Boston University.

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## **The Asset Cont.**

*from page 13*

**ISM:** In your opinion, what is the most difficult aspect of the industry right now?

**KC:** Finding an audience. We have lost a lot of our audience, and we are not doing a good job of attracting them back. We need to figure out a way to cultivate an audience for independent films. It is no longer sound business to make a film, market it, bank on good reviews, and wait for the audience to show up.

**ISM:** What types of films are you interested in distributing with your dGenerate Films banner?

**KC:** Chinese independent films, that are about mainland China, and are made by Chinese filmmakers living in China.

**ISM:** Can you tell our readers more about the “Chinatown Film Project”?

**KC:** It is a project I started while I was living in Chinatown. I realized there were so many negative stereotypes about Chinatown. Most New Yorkers come for the food and the cheap knockoffs, and do not look any deeper. With the backing of the Museum for Chinese in America (MOCA), I reached out to eleven New York based filmmakers and asked them to make a short film to show us how they see Chinatown. We were lucky to have amazingly talented directors participate in the project: Miguel Arteta, Rose Troche, Sam Pollard, Cary Fukunaga, Jem Cohen, Amir Naderi, Wayne Wang, Patty Chang, Shelly Silver, So Yong Kim, Bradley Rust Gray,

and Rich Wong.

**ISM:** You have formed a partnership with The Center for Asian-American media for mentoring. How can our Asian-American readership find out more about this initiative?

**KC:** It is called the CAAM Fellowship and there is more information on the [www.caamedia.org](http://www.caamedia.org) website. It came from my own desire to have a mentor when I started in the film industry. Most Asian-Americans go against their families' wishes when they enter the entertainment industry, and most of our friends do not work in entertainment. So, we're totally on our own, yet Hollywood is a place where you need to know people to move ahead. The Fellowship is in its second year, and demand is incredibly high. We have already received over 200 applications across all disciplines. Our Fellows have on average five years' of experience in the industry, and I work closely with them to find the right mentor for their project's needs and their professional development. This is our effort to grow Asian-American media from within our own community.

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## Ear For Sound Cont.

*from page 6*

**ISM:** Have you watched a film with music you composed and thought you could have done things differently?

**DR:** As an artist I am always critiquing my own work and looking for different ways to make it better, to make it perfect. That being said, once I have let it go public I try not to go back and look for ways to make it better.

**ISM:** What types of films or series are you interested in working on?

**DR:** The types of projects I tend to work on are in sci-fi, thriller, and action/adventure; however I also enjoy the challenge of working on projects in other genres that require a completely different style of music.

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## Mr. Stage 32 Cont.

*from page 16*

to get eyes on your campaign, how to sell your campaign. Another big mistake people make is they have no idea how to fix a budget. Do you really need 20K for a fifteen-minute short with two actors that takes place

exclusively at a kitchen table? Probably not.

**ISM:** Have you made connections on Stage32.com which have benefitted your film career?

**RB:** Oh, absolutely. I'm on there networking every day. I would be a fool not to. Over the last month alone, I've taken no less than a half dozen meetings that were a result of networking on Stage 32. We have a running joke around here that I am like Sy Sperling. I am not only the Stage 32 CEO, I'm also a member.

**ISM:** Since closing Razor Magazine, have you had any desire to create another publication?

**RB:** Oh god, no. (Laughs) RAZOR, much like Stage 32, was a labor of love. From an editorial standpoint, everything I wanted to do we were able to accomplish. We had top name writers, progressive long form journalism, frontline fashion editorial, and stellar photography. Everyone bought in to what we were doing. I would spend my days speaking to people like David Mamet about writing, Paul Haggis about directing, or James Carville about, well, things I shouldn't mention here. People loved the product. Our readership was over 1.5M when we decided to shut things down. That was an incredible number for an independent publisher with only one title. Ultimately and sadly, print has been dying a slow death. Advertisers have turned their budgets toward the web.

There is one area of Stage 32 where the spirit of RAZOR lives on, and that is the blog. My mission from day one was to find writers who have been in the trenches to come in and tell their stories for the benefit of the entire community, to entertain and educate. To that end, we have featured such accomplished professionals as Rex Pickett, Doug Richardson and Danny Rubin. We plan on bringing more extraordinary and diverse talent to the blog as we progress.

**ISM:** What are your future plans for expansion with Stage32.com?

**RB:** To say we have a myriad of plans in the works would be an understatement. Some ideas fall directly within the boundaries of "Conception to Completion". Others are broader and more ambitious. Many of them, we feel will give our members even more opportunity to be successful. Stay tuned.



## All About The Business Cont.

*from page 34*

**ISM:** Does equity financing still exist for independent producers in Europe?

**IH:** Yes, mainly for big territories such as France, UK and Germany. Their production houses seek equity all over the world. Mainly in the U.S., however, this is not the Film Europe profile, so I can't comment on it.

**ISM:** Does your company work with up and coming producers, directors and writers?

**IH:** Yes, we do. However we are at the preliminary stage of it. First, I have to establish the whole structure of Film Europe.

**ISM:** Does your company work with talent from the United States, Canada or Mexico?

**IH:** Not yet. Or better say, not directly. However, many independent European films we distribute have been working with talent from those territories. Traditionally, Spain works with Mexico, and the UK works with the U.S. and Canada. Canada also attracts many companies from France. The world is closer and closer. There are many signs that Europe, as well as North America should work together. As we know, there are few "biggs" around, like India and China. We are Europeans and we understand North Americans. Sooner or later there will be a new cultural, economic, and political block called Atlantic civilization where the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Australia and Europe will form a firm partnership and later will be followed by Latin America and Russia. I predict it, since we understand films from those territories; we know what those films are talking about. We understand them more than we understand films from China, India, or Nigeria. Look what film story, narrative, metaphors and cinematography you understand and I will tell you how the political world will look.

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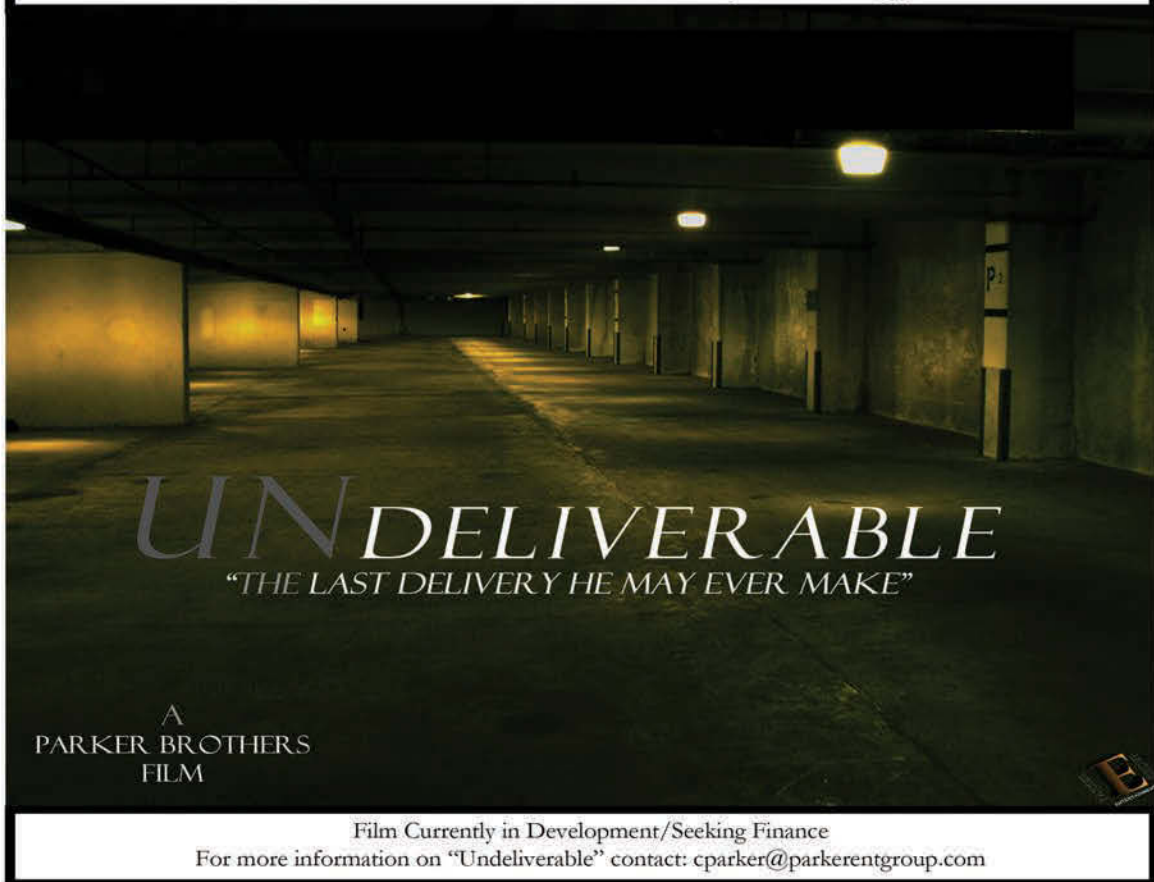
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## Indie Source Magazine Spotlights



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