

The Drink Tank Issue 76: Film, Film, Film...



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WELCOME TO THE MOVIE MAKER ISSUE!



I've been thinking about this one for a while. I love making movies, or at least pretending like I'm making movies, so I knew at some point I'd have to do an issue all about using the writing of some of my good friends. That day arrived when I realised that Frank Wu had a project that I wanted to hype (and for some reason my short film reviews in early Drink Tanks still get noticed) and Judith was just itchin' to get to talk about her experience on the Jiggle Team. After a call went out to friends from Cinequest and elsewhere, the issue came together and what you're about to read is a look at what happens when filmmakers stop for a second and think about what they've done.



This is How We Make The Movie

by

*Frank Wu Director Producer and Writer of
Guidolon The Giant Space Chicken and Friends
Half-Power Half-Hour*

I am deep in production of my craziest scheme yet. Crazier



than trying to build an art career. Crazier than going to grad school to get a Ph.D. in bacterial genetics. Crazier than starting a life as a patent agent, helping huge pharmaceutical companies sue other huge pharmaceutical companies for ridiculous amounts of money, of which I get a pittance.

No, I am now making an animated movie. The plan is to make a five- to ten-minute pilot, which I can then try to sell to the Cartoon Network (or somesuch) as a weekly TV show, to be called "Guidolon the Giant Space Chicken and Friends Half-Power Half-Hour." In the first episode, we see Guidolon the Giant Space Chicken directing a Giant Space Chicken movie. He has delusions of grandeur - he thinks he's a Shakespearean tragic hero, but really he's just a giant space chicken.

And so I have built this team, sucked all these people into my scheme. I am writer-director-art

director. There are now around 25 people who have or are working on this. How do you get people to do stuff for you, my pal Symantha asks me? Well, I pay them. This is an investment, really, all this moola coming right out of my pocket into those of animators, artists, writers, musicians, a business guy... and I am running this circus, all while trying to keep my dayjob.

The deadline is looming, too. June 20-22 I am going to New York for a huge trade show, the Licensing International Show, where companies (toy companies, cable networks, etc.) come and buy up new crazy projects. Like, um, maybe about a giant space chicken? The video HAS to be done by then. And so, this is a typical day for me.

Hang on!

TUES APRIL 18, 2006 -

12:35 AM - Artist Rachel Forbes emails me seven images of wings. These are for the side view of Takashi, who is the down-on-his-luck human actor (read: Laurence Olivier) that Guidolon hires to play him, in a chicken suit. Next step: Make sure these images flow well together and then color them. Also, make sure that Takashi from the side looks like the same character as the images of Takashi from the front. Spent next couple hours tweaking the Takashi-from-the-side images instead



of sleeping.

MEANWHILE

2:02 AM - Diana Sherman emails me with her flight info. Diana's a writer in her own right, but also the voice actress who does Trisuron, the giant space Triceratops, Guidolon's girlfriend, and Lt. Cmdr. Lyta White, the scientist on the spaceship that fights Takashi. I'm bringing her up from L.A. to re-record her voice, because Chris recorded it last time I brought her up (I was off at a con) and (technically) he did a crappy job (sorry, Chris!).

3:28 AM - Todd Tennant, chief character designer, sends me a friendly email checking in to see if I had a nice Easter and telling me to go to bed. I

tweak the side images a little bit more and then crash.

9 AM - I am supposed to be at work helping people sue each other. I am not at work.

I am at home, wondering: What format do DVD's use? Before we go to the trade show, can I get

a whole bunch of paper Guidolon masks made - so little kids will wander around wearing these and everyone will wonder what's up with that, and come to our booth. Will there be any kids there? Can I find a company that can die cut the masks and put the elastics on? Also, is it possible to get the animation done in time? No, don't think that. Don't go there.

11:36 AM - I called a company, Nationwide CD, about getting some postcards made for the trade show. Like ten thousand. Tony Olivas emails me back with specs. They can also burn copies of the DVD, but they won't re-format a Quicktime movie into a DVD-playable format. I don't know how to re-format.

I wonder if any of my animators

do? I am depending on them to know all this technical stuff I don't.

I am really late for work.

11:47, 11:48, 11:49 AM - More friendly emails from Todd.

11:54 AM - emails back and forth to animator BenniiD, to make sure he got animation of the character Octuron (the giant space octopus) so he can use that. BenniiD is animating and also pulling together animations from other animators, to make the whole thing. If anything happens to Bennii or his computer, it's game over.

1:28 PM - I am at work. I get an email from Vira Hinton of The Delaware Company. The paperwork went through and my production company, Gadanin Productions, is now officially an LLC! Yeah! That means if anyone sues anyone because of Guidolon, I don't lose my shirt. Yeah! Gadanin, by the way, is named after a misspelling of a protein that makes fish smell bad.

3:06 PM - email from Jonah Gray - powerful animator, who the day before sent me a finished animation of Takashi jumping around as lasers hit around his feet (while the space captain says, "Dance, you giant monster scum, dance!" - the space captain being voiced by Sr. Garcia). Jonah thanks me for sending him a copy of "The Illusion of Life," a book all

about Disney animation. It shows us how to animate, and also shows us how woefully stiff and lifeless our animation is, compared to Disney's. Eit.

5 PM - I can leave work now. Yeah! I do my five-minute commute how and then furiously pump out images for Jonah's next sequence to animate. He's done now with his last assignment, and now I need to feed him images to do his next scene, wherein the spaceship electrocutes Takashi, and then blows up. I pull out a DVD of Sealab 2021, the episode wherein Stormy throws some weird device into the water and electrocutes Dr. Quinn. I don't have a good set-up for screen captures, so my work-around is to play the video on slo-mo, and take pictures of the screen itself with a digital camera. I compile these and send them off, along with similar screenshots from Return of the Jedi when Vader is electrocuted. I prep some images for the animation itself and send those off. Then I realize that Todd had done some images for me - wherein you see Takashi's skeleton - but I can't find them on my computer. I email Todd to ask him to re-send them. Jonah can't animate until I get the images from Todd and then massage them to work with everything else. Another small burp in



You can find out more about Guidolon at the official Frank Wu website, FrankWu.com or at Guidolon.com

production.

10:11 PM - Rodney Artiles, who's doing small sculptures of Guidolon, emails me. I want the sculptures so I can give them to the Cartoon Network executives at the trade show. I want one of those to sit on an executive's

desk, reminding him that he should give us a dumptruck full of money. I also want to show people from Hasbro or Mattell that Guidolon would make cool toys. Rodney says he's a little delayed in making the sculptures. OK, but, time is running short.

Continue to work on images for the electrocution scene.

12:06 AM - Email from Daniel Starr; Diana is staying with Daniel and his wife Wendy. Directions to his house so I can pick her up at 10:30 Sat. so we can go to Jim Terman's and re-record Diana's voice.

It's been a quiet day - only 8 or 9 people have contacted me regarding this movie today. Usually it's closer to a dozen. And most communications require me to create or tweak images or whip out ad copy or prep publicity material, or something else that takes around half an hour to an hour. Or more.

And now I have several hours more work on different images, so I can feed those to the animators.

Before I get to go to sleep.

And that's what it's like to make a movie.



The Making of The LA Dream Team

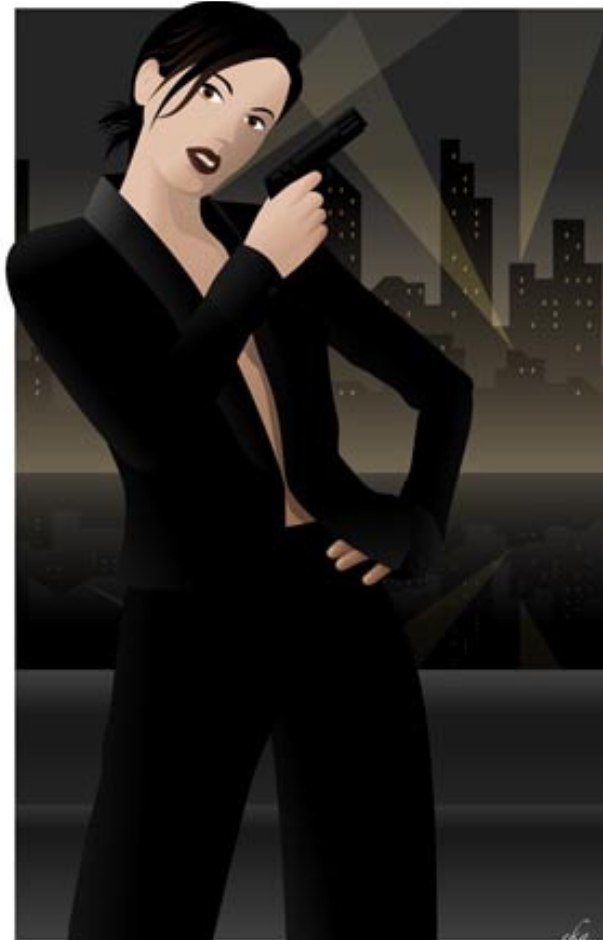
By

Judith Morel Co-Writer Money Mark and Boob Tape Girl

I've worked on a bunch of films in a bunch of functions. Mostly during college, when various students would ask me for my help in putting together their projects. I've been a props mistress, I've been a PA, I've even directed a couple of things. I also became known as a girl who could fund films, and to date I've funded about fifteen projects including one of Chris'. Only once have I been convinced to write something that ended up on the screen...almost.

I had been living in LA and dating a few guys who were in The Business. That's not to say that you'd recognize their names, you wouldn't, but they picked up days here and there on various sets and at times made a living. One of them, James Nelson Higtken, who family's name was mangled at Ellis Island, was my regular Tuesday night. The two of us got along very well, and he was a make-up guy. Not pretty girl made prettier, but Monster make-up. He was a huge Fangoria-type, but I didn't mind because he would take me to the Sunset Grill for dinner before taking me to his place for the rest.

When new James Bond movie is



released, TBS and Spike TV will always do a marathon of old Bond films. I've been with Chris where he has sat on a couch for the upside of ten hours watching James Bond films. I've always enjoyed them, but not nearly to the level that Chris and James did. James and I watched Live and Let Die after we'd finished up for the evening and then we started talking.

"I wish I could direct a James Bond movie." He said.

"I'd much rather make a Bond

film with just Bond Girls and no Bond himself."

That last statement was one of the dumbest things I ever said. The next week, when I came over to meet him at his place, he told me to grab a seat by the fireplace. There was only one chair and next to it was a small table with a script on it. I took a seat and looked over the script. It was a terrible script, I mean just awful. It was like that Tarrantino concept Fox Force 5, a group of female superspies. Each of them had a gimmick and it also flowed with a huge cliché and terrible dialogue. The story went through simple twists and the girls had all these in-fighting segments. For a film, it was awful, but there was a lot to like about it as a soft-core jiggle TV show. I had been a big fan of Sherman Oaks, a show on Showtime that was funny and sexy.

"So, what'd you think of it?" He asked.

"It's crap. Pure crap, but there's stuff that could work." I said.

"Really?"

I stood up and walked over to his computer.

"Let me take a pass."

That's when I started the script using his title: The LA Dream Team, but in my mind it was always The Jiggle Squad. The way I rewrote it made the characters into a slightly more coherent unit and without the



lame gimmicks, but with extra scenes of planed tits-and-ass for the camera fun. I made it funnier, but still kinda serious. It was Buffy-esque in tone, almost like the later show *She-Spies*. I made it as serious as I could without making it overly campy. I mean, I knew it was campy, but it was outwardly serious...in the loosest sense.

The story of the pilot was this: a group at a battered women's shelter start to learn martial arts, and one of them, Diana, shows real aptitude. The instructor, Windham Suel, asks her to come with him to talk to a group of other women about what he's taught her. She agrees, but he ends up introducing her to a group of women who he trained with the idea of forming his group of kick ass private eyes. As they're being introduced, Windham ends up being murdered. The girls then go about trying to solve the murder and that would

have been the entire season; the girls solving the crime and fighting other troubles that popped up along the way. The first half was the set up, the last half as what could have stood alone as it's own episode.

The first episode was the girls going into the Lion's Den of a local tough and managing to subdue him and gain a valuable clue to the identity of the killer of their mentor. It was all very much what *Veronica Mars* became, except it was designed for busty females and not attractive teen stars.

When I gave it to James, he liked it a lot. In fact, he liked it so much I knew he had no real taste so that anything that was even slightly better than what he himself could produce became perfection. I should have called an end to my involvement at that point, but I did not.

"So, how are we gonna make it?" He said.

"Well, I wouldn't mind putting up the money for it.

I never should have said that, but by the time I was finished washing up that night, he had already set things in motion. I found a noticed

The Cast of *The LADream Team* included four porn stars, the best known of which was Devon. Barbara Miles was originally cast but did not end up making it to the set and was replaced. Judith Morel was responsible for find her replacement, in less than a day Nicole Asterdam, who refused to tell them her real name and instead used the dancing name she was known by from her days as a pole dancer at one of the clubs around LAX. The three males with lines were all friends of Judith and SaBean from Catalina and Beverly Hills. The only known copies of *The LADream Team* are in the collections of the Morel Sisters.

posted the next day on one of the local Actor Call boards.

Wanted: Busty Females Who Can Act and Fight (or Learn to do Both)

If you've never lived in LA, you won't understand that the message you see there will attract thousands of women. In fact, it wasn't just girls from LA. By the following week, there were portfolios from around the country plus a few from places like Germany, the UK and even Finland. The Finnish girl was hot too, but we didn't want to put up for airfare. The next couple of weeks, more than a thousand pieces came through. I learned that James had put it on about fifty different places, including using a friend who was an extras casting agent. We had all of these pieces to work through.

Now, I understand his eagerness, I mean here's a guy who was good at make-up, but in reality the best money he'd ever made was doing Haunted Houses. He wanted to make a freakin' movie and here was his chance. We went through all of them and decided to give live auditions to fifty-six of them.



This Girl Sent in Dozens of Photos like this one...only nuder.

That's right, fifty-six chicks with massive boobs all in one place. I'm certain M would have killed to be in the middle of that action.

The first sets of auditions weren't great. There were a couple who were pretty talented at reading. One, a woman with only good sized breasts, delivered a monologue that really hit hard. She was terrible at the physical action part though. There were the opposite too. A few of the

girls were brilliant at all the kicking and jumping and one was even a 21-4 boxer with sixteen knockouts, but she couldn't talk to save her life. I was impressed with one of them who had worked as a stunt woman, and her reading wasn't bad, but James wasn't as impressed. We ended up the second day with a list of twelve. That's when the real fun started.

We decided that a Wednesday would be perfect for the final casting sessions. Here's the breakdown: six porn stars, three stunt woman and three regular girls with good racks. We worked with all of them all afternoon and it became obvious which ones were going to work. Four of the Porn Stars did very well, and two of them

were used as the girls in the team. We used the three regular girls and hired the others as our stunt women and put them in some other small roles. They were all happy with the way we went. One of the girls was Devon, who picked up the physical stuff really fast and by the end of the afternoon had a solid grasp on the proper way to deliver a line. It was really fun to watch her improve as the event went on. She was easily the best actress by the time we finished our filming.

Now, I had a lot of money that I



could have thrown at this. Most Pilots cost upwards of a couple hundred thousand. I didn't want to drop that much. Instead, I put about thirty grand into it. No one complained about the money they were being paid, which I had fully expected. We did what we could and punted on a few effects that would have cost us far too much. It was working out well...

Sort of.

The first problem was the rehearsal process. We had set up twenty-one days for both acting practice and physical work. The first ten days were brutal, as that was when we started to teach them how to move like trained fighters. Devon moved really well and she had a very high center of gravity due to massive implants. This worked to our advantage because she would do the smallest things and they would cause her boobs to fly all over the place no matter how much we strapped her down. Those things had a mind of their own.

It was easy to see that this was only going to work to a degree. I was enjoying working with everyone, and while they were all getting better, they still weren't up to the they'd need to be to sell the pilot. The girls picked up the physical stuff very well, but the acting was only marginal. The shoot itself was no picnic.

First off, we lost one of our leads when she just didn't show up for the



shoot the first day of actual filming. This led to more than an hour of frantic calling followed by us giving up and calling another girl on the list who we had passed over. She was so happy to get the part, she left a shoot of her own (I believe for Scores) to come and do our pilot. That meant we had to give her very little physically to do because she hadn't trained much at all. I rewrote a scene where she was

supposed to be kicking ass to where she wanted to do the ass-kicking, but everyone else kept getting in her way and finished them. It was a great device to hide the problems with Nicole not being ready. She was a decent actress, especially since she had done several real TV shows over the years.

The next issue was Devon. She fell hard on one of the simple stunts and was out for two days. We half-stopped the production and worked on shooting stills with the other girls. This turned out to be a really good idea, because we managed to sell these to various web sources and make back nearly five grand.

When Devon got back, we worked harder and faster. I ended up working on various other aspects of the pilot, including being the one who prepared the girls for shooting by applying the cleavage enhancements. That's right, I had to tape the girls together to make sure that they were perfect for the camera. It was a fun job, especially since Devon was ticklish beyond belief. By the end of the second full week of shooting, I was tired, and we were at least 2/3 of the way into the shoot and had to finish or everything would be for naught. We had to finish, which sounds weird when you think about how obvious it was that we were creating garbage, but finished garbage is an accomplishment that a lot of filmmakers don't come close to. I had



to push everyone, and sink a little more money into it, but it was completed only six days behind schedule. We had all the material and now we had to edit it all together. It was supposed to take three weeks for James to get it together, which would have left us three months before the major trade show season started. James wasn't as up on the edit as I had hoped. After a month, he had a rough edit. Rough wasn't the right word. It was harsh. The titles were missing. There were lots of dropped frames and cut-backs. It was ugly and everything went too fast. Plus, it revealed that our sound was weak. I called a friend and gave him all the

footage. James was not happy.

Irish Johnny Legland is a guy who you can trust to do everything almost on time at nearly twice the amount allotted for the budget. That's on his good days. He got me his first cut around a month after he got the material. It was much better than James, but it wasn't quite there. I called James and had him sit down with me and IRL and we went over it several times.

And a few more times.

We had three days when we finished and we just said that we weren't even going to try. It was just too damn weak a product to try and sell. Devon was great, she had transformed and has since gone on to do a few really good action things in Japan after her breast reduction. The other girls weren't at her level, but she proved herself to us and we loved working with her.

I put it away, though a year later, Irish Johnny had gotten us a meeting with HBO about maybe using it, but we knew it would never happen. We did get to talk to a lot of people, and James got it shown at a Pin-Up Convention in Japan, but really, it was a lost cause.

So, I sunk nearly a bunch of money into it and ended up making back about twelve grand. That's the sad fact about the state of producing TV pilots.



A Story of Making a Movie That Didn't Suck By Mike Swan

There are a lot of stories I have from my days making movies. You don't get a film degree without acquiring a bunch of them. I decided, against my better judgement, that I should do a feature film instead of a twenty-minute short like the rest of the folks in my class were doing for their final project. I didn't have a script, I didn't have the money, and certainly didn't have the talent to do a feature, but hey, there've been a lot of movies made with less.

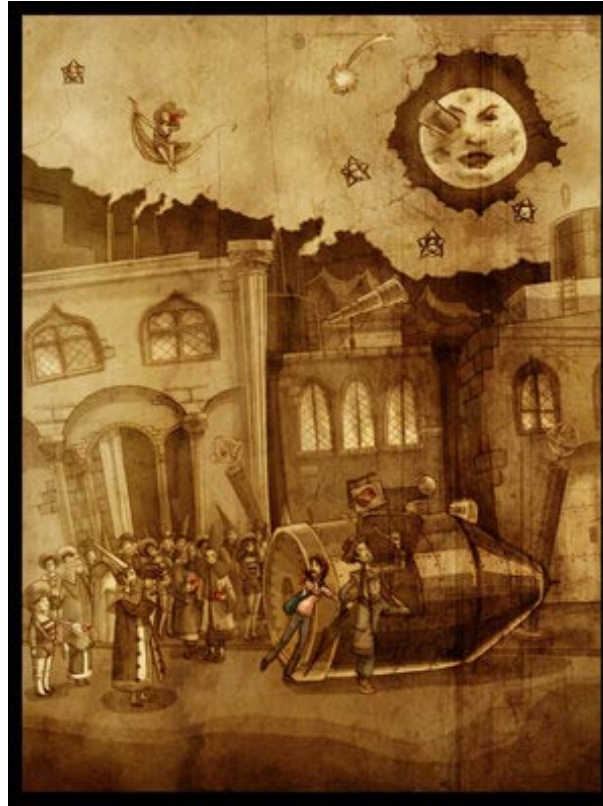
I called a bunch of guys together. Well, actually, it was girls. I got SaBean and Judith (who helped me pay for the thing) and a couple of the better juniors from the program. I admit it, I always used my film projects to get my chicks, and it often worked. This time, I managed a girlfriend out of it, one of those lovely Junior girls. We started talking about what to do and came up with a story that would make everyone in the program smile.

We'd been watching early films in one of the Film History classes I'd put off until my final semester. We watched all the Lumiere films known to exist, the early Griffith films, a few of the great early one-reel comedies. We spent a full two weeks talking about Melies. He was easily the most important man in the history of film. There'd be no science fiction movies, no fantasy, not even regular editing without Georges Melies. I figured that I could put together a film that would use the Melies style and tell a modern story.

Now, if you pitched the concept I came up with in my mind, I'd have called you an idiot. It was a SteamPunk story, only I didn't want to admit it and called it a Melies-esque pastiche. I was a film major and therefore entitled to a bit of pretension. It's my right, dammit! We worked a lot on the story and it ended up being pretty smart, if a little convoluted.

I decided that we were going to

work in order. This is not the ordinary way of working, but I thought it would give us a better idea of the ways in which we could build connections. I'd make a small alteration in the background and that would lead me to building it in bigger and bigger in each subsequent scene. It made it so easy to



do these little things and it made me wonder why more filmmakers wouldn't work this way.

Elizabeth, the girl who was in charge of set design complained loudly.

"It's not the way to do things. We'll have to tear down and rebuild sets!" She complained at least once.

I pointed out that we had the money and the manpower so she piped down, especially when we decided to add her to the list of people we'd be paying. She was happy enough to work the extra hours since we were paying her a fair bit.

The script was finished on a Wednesday. I took a brief pass at it and the whole thing was completed by noon Sunday. I had never worked so hard on anything in my life. I don't think I slept at all in all that time. I had some help with the staying up part through some pharmaceutical assistance. The final script wasn't great, but it was fun. I couldn't really tell how weak it was at the time, but when I re-read it about a year ago, I could see where we went wrong. The whole thing lacked structure and the way the end hit ya, while completely original, was only original because no one would be dumb enough to do it like that.

The first shot was of the Lady Carlisle walking through the streets of Boston. Now, this was one of the few shots we did on location. There are plenty of parts of Boston that still have that look and we managed to find a cul-de-sac that was surrounded by a series of apartments that didn't allow cars. We talked to every tenant and they said that we could shoot one night. We used a couple of them as extras. Now, Boston is not known for consistency of weather, and it was the

ugliest type of Boston weather. Now, we were shooting in February, so we should have expected it, but I'm an idiot. Still, we set up and were ready to shoot, even with the snow. One of the neighbors called down.

"You wanna set up a canopy?"

I wouldn't have thought of that, and within a couple of minutes, the residents had drawn across a tarp between the two sides of the U. The snow was held up and we got about two-and-a-half hours of great shooting. My DP got so much coverage that it wasn't a chore to find what we needed. We had a week off before the next few days of shooting. I got the film developed and started editing the first few minutes. We had great material and I had just lucked into it. Still, I didn't know what was next for us. I was worried that it wouldn't make much sense.

You see, I had allowed myself to cut a couple of scenes in favor of time. Lady Carlisle was murdered and the next two scenes were supposed to go into detail as to why people had reasons to murder her. I cut 'em. Maybe it was the benzydrine, but they took forever in my eyes. I left the scene where the investogators go looking into the cause of death in a weird laboratory. We built the set and



it was glorious. Things on long arms, a weird clock thing (**that's the concept sketch** <---) and it was a beautiful thing. I never should have cut the scenes because the entire thing should never have worked, but as was becoming the habit in this one, I was saved by someone else. One of the actors started improving when I told them to just play around with the characters. One of them mentioned a couple of the other characters. In a simple way, he had managed to tie all the characters together. It was literally a one line throw-away and it saved me. Lucky was a Lady...well, an effeminate dude actually, but it was so sweet.

The next few days went exactly as they were supposed to. Shots were quick and clean. The DP worked fast and got amazing results. The story wound through the world that we had set up. There was the murder, and then the crew had to be shot out of the cannon to the moon where the main suspects had flown off to. It was a fun little story that I got into the more we worked.

There were so many little things that happened where it could have been disaster. I crashed for a weekend and ended up in the hospital. I had SaBean go down and direct the action for the day. She did an amazing job. So amazing that I invited her to step

aboard as the assistant director. She was more than happy to do and she ended up working with the actors so much I thought about giving her co-director status.

Well, I did THINK about it.

When everything was finished, I edited it with the help of Janelle, the girl who had been serving as my romantic interest. We made good time, or at least we had good times. We ended up with the finished piece more than a month before I had to submit it as my thesis. We arranged a showing (**Chris Arranged it, actually- cg**) and it got great reactions. I remember, through a certain haze that SaBean, Janelle and I were sharing, that we got a standing O. That was a big deal to me, but moreso to my friends who had really made this a good flick.

I sold it in 2000 for twenty grand to an internet distributor. It's still not available, but it will be. I tried for ages to sell it to a real studio, but I never could. I guess the luck just ran out when I said "Cut".





I was around when Mike was working on *Woven Words*, the strange steampunk-ish film that Mike Swan directed as his senior thesis. I served in a few different roles on the crew (and a couple of times in front of the camera) It deserves a look at the way the film unfolded (just in case Federal doesn't manage to release it!)

The story starts on December 21st, 1899 with Lady Carlisle, one of the American Kingdom's most influential members of the Aristocracy, wandering down the street with a briefcase shackled to her wrist. That's right, the Revolution went a different direction and George Washington, or George The Great, was crowned King. I always liked that touch. Lady Carlisle is then confronted by a guy dressed like Jack the Ripper and he slashes her. In her last action, she throws her bracelet away across the alley into a snowbank. The killer hears a constable coming and weighs the choice, deciding to cut the hand off Lady Carlisle and leaving the bracelet in the snow. That's the opening, and though I don't think I ever saw the final version of the scene, I always thought that it was a good series of visuals.

The story then goes to the pair of investigators who are dissecting the body at the high-tech 1899 morgue. It's way cool the stuff they designed. I'm in that scene, playing the voice over the speaking tube. "Detective Laitne, there's a second body waiting for you sir." They hadn't even started cutting into Lady Carlisle yet. They wheel in the body and while they are starting to do the simple investigation, they find a bloody knife. They examine it and find that it had been used to kill Lady Carlisle. They finally get to cutting open Lady Carlisle's body and they discover that she's not altogether human. She's a hybrid of some sort. They keep everything under wraps and start the investigation.

They start by interviewing her brother, who is all human, and they ask him who would have wanted to murder her. He says that she was very popular, but she was very thrifty to her staff, buying very little and using cheap materials for everything, despite being a very wealthy woman. The detectives go and check on her finances and discover that she was broke. They go to talk to one of her business partners and discover that they had left to the Moon. The detectives are then shot to the Moon (like in *A Trip To The Moon*) and they discover that there are dozens of Aristocrats there by Royal order for the opening of the Trans-Lunar tunnel. The detectives start asking

questions and they discover that several of the wives of the men who worked on the tunnel were wearing the same bracelets that Lady Carlisle had thrown to keep from having the killer find them.

After an incident where they are discovered snooping around a secret part of the Lunar tunnel where they manage to find several pieces of evidence, including a map of Boston. They return and go back to studying the bodies and then manage to reconstruct the murder where after Lady Carlisle threw away the bracelet to make the killer make a choice between the materials in the briefcase and the bracelet. The killer then went several blocks and met his boss, who he gave the hand and the contents of the briefcase to the person who hired him and then the boss killed him, dragged him to the garden and left him there. They then have the pond at the Public Garden where the body was found dragged and find the briefcase. The thing hadn't been opened and it simply had some money, a few hundred dollars, a few notes on Moon returns and the same map that the detectives had found in the tunnel.

The next part was wonderful. The detectives go and greet one of the Moon returns that was listed and they find that it was entirely of materials. They manage to get on board and discover that there were several people

hidden in the materials. They find material that is certainly biologic, but not human. Comparisons with Lady Carlises' body proves that they are the nearly the same. The detectives discover that there had been hundreds of the flights to Earth that brought dozens of Lunarians. They realize that the murderer must have known about the smuggling. They go and travel to where the shipping statements said the Moon materials were being shipped and they find a huge camp full of Lunarians and hybrids. When they go to inform the Military of this, they are laughed at.

Detective Laitne then breaks his way into the Queen's home and says that he needs to tell the Queen something. He gives the speech about Lady Carlisle and how everything was happening and how there was an Alien Invasion about to descend on America. She explains that she's known all along and that Lady Carlisle was in fact her half-sister, with the two of them sharing the same Lunarian father. The detective then figures that Lady Carlisle was murdered by someone who wanted to stop the invasion, but the Queen corrects him and says that she had her killed because she was smuggling many away to freedom in Boston and not into the Queen's service. The Queen ordered that the hand be taken as a traditional Lunarian trophy. At that moment, the Queen gives the order for

the Lunarians to attack and that leads every human in America to be killed.

Yeah, it's a real up ending.



Save More on the Complete Works of Chris Garcia and Steven Sprinkles

I've never met Steven Sprinkles. I think that's a shame because he's so fucking hot in all the photos I've seen of him. Chris I know and love in my own personal way. The two of them have done three films that are all very different, all very funny, and all sort of

strange. Chris sent me viewing copies of them all and here's what I have to say.

The Chick Magnet (2005)

This was the first of their films together and there are rough edges that are obviously ready to be worked out. The story of a guy who becomes physically magnetic to women is a good one. The strength of the film is the acting, which is surprising.

The lead, John Chapman, is a great comedic actor. He's just got this everyman look that draws in the eye. He's able to get laughs the same way that Buster Keaton did in the sound era. His delivery, coupled with his wonderfully off-beat reaction shots, are pure old-timey comedy. Kate Kelton, who is smokin' hot herself, is good as



the Lab Lady. She plays her part like a Dragonbitch, and it works. My favourite moment in the film is the look on her face when she trips John as he's walking to check on the mice.

There are a few jokes that fall flat. A gay gag, that while inventive, is just too much out there, and a scene of women being popped off with a shovel are both misses. There are hits though, including Chris' turn as a mime that gets run over by a giant rolling ball of women and a great Batman-style cut



and Duke's of Hazard reference. While it's not 100% on comedy, it does work for humor.

The part I liked least were the effects. Yes, I know that they were done on home systems, and yes, for that it's impressive, but they still looked fake to me. The rolling ball of women crushing through the streets of San Francisco is good, but fake. In the movement scenes, there's nothing wrong with it, but in the non-moving shots, it's impossible to believe that these are real people. Chris also mentioned that there are little effects moments throughout (like a poster that wasn't really there) and since you can't tell those are different from reality, I'd say that those are brilliant.

I'd say that *The Chick Magnet* would get a 7 out of 10. It was just a plain good time.

Saving Pockets (2005)

This is, without question, my favorite of the three films. The concept is moronic, pure idiocy, but the resulting comedy is stronger than either of the other two. It's also my kind of fucked-up tale of amusing characters.

In *48 Hours*, the team put together a story about a band of roving Street Medics. To boil it down, a former Motley Cru cover band (Dr. Feelgood) decided to start helping out the crapitous elements of *The Streets*.

This means that they go and try to give medical care to the local Homeless who may not want to be helped. The very first shot is of them driving around looking for 'Fresh Rags' to help. They find a guy and give him an examination on teh street by the light of the car's headlights.

That's comedy.

In the mockumentary format, these guys managed to make a lot of fun things happen. They hold clinics and have all sorts of unspeakable things happen. There's a part where a homeless guy is running away and John Chapman, genius that he is, does a flying tackle that looks like it fucking stung!

The cast is good, the writing is solid, the jokes hit and the subject matter is just plain wrong. I wish they'd done more with it, as I was really wanting to see a much bigger piece than what we got. The editing was stronger here than in *The Chick Magnet* and it deserved better than it got when it came to notice. I just hope that the boys do another one next year that lives up to the standard they set here.

The Last Woman on Earth (2006)

Saving Pockets was the one that I liked the best but I'd imagine that *The Last Woman on Earth* would be the best of them for the larger audience. Oh, I thought it was funny, far funnier than *The Chick Magnet*, but it

was also kinda safe. That's not to say it wasn't an adult piece of work, it certainly is, but while *The Last Woman on Earth* has a streak of dark comedy in it, *Saving Pockets* is a total package of dark comedy. Still, I really enjoyed *The Last Woman*.

The entire film rests on the shoulders (and in a way on the impressive boobs) of Miss Kate Kelton. Chris told me to watch *Harold & Kumar Go To White Castle* and she was pretty good in it. Here, she is the only person who has come to work one day. We follow her slide into insanity and see that she goes crazy when there's nothing holding her back. Of course, there's a twist ending.

The strength here is the way that Kate sells her comedy. She plays insane as if she's just passing through it on the way to something more entertaining. I'm a big fan of that method. When she goes fully nuts (and in a way it's not well set-up, which made me think that there was a lot of material they cut out for time) and she does a little striptease, I was fucking rolling with the film. The timing of it worked, and that's all about the editing, but as soon as things end, we're given the best full-on carnivale music you'll ever hear.

What's funny about this one is that Chris plays a tiny role (I think he's on screen for about 5 seconds, but he does a single move (an adjust-



ing of his collar) that got the last big laugh from me. I've always thought Chris could have been a brilliant comic, because he's got that look, but here, in a tiny movement, he sells the entire thing.

Well, that and Kate rolling on an office chair in her bra. That was pretty sweet.

The Last Woman on Earth is on IFC MediaLAB right now and you should give it a watch.

So, the films of Chris and his buddy Steve are all pretty good, though only one really made me feel like I was watching anything that had never been done before. I'm hoping these guys work together again, and if it makes sense, I'd love to have a role in whatever these guys come up with.



I've got a lot to Say **by** ***Christopher J. Garcia***

I'm still working on making movies, though the one that I'm really interested in getting finished is stalled. I'm working on a film that I really wanna see made but I kinda doubt it will ever be. It's my great waiting project.

The thing that's hardest for me is my Mission Statement: I don't want to be a filmmaker, I just wanna make movies. That's a statement that most folks won't really understand, but there's a lot of sense to it. I don't want to be the hustling filmmaker who spends ten minutes gathering funds, pressing flesh and bold-faced lying through his teeth to get his projects made. I wanna have a regular job (as a historian) and work on movies when I'm not working (which often includes while I am physically at work).

The Cactus Club Documentary is a good example. It's not completely easy, but once a week we meet, maybe we have an interview a week and maybe we don't, but we've spent a year making it. Yes, if we had managed to devote ourselves to it full-time, we'd have been finished in July or June of last year, but with this method, I just feel better.

Besides, with the Day job, I have full access to all sorts of props that I'd never be able to find elsewhere.

Mother Would be Proud.

Neil Baker

So I find myself on the exhilarating cusp between development (that splendid time when my production company sits around drinking lots of Starbucks and throwing ideas around like bio-degradable confetti at a responsible wedding) and pre-production (that time when we actually have to do something, dammit) on our latest venture, and I am struck by a moral dilemma.

Firstly, some background on me, as I am new to these pages and hopefully not the iceberg to finally sink Chris's ship.

I met Chris properly at the last Cinequest, where I was showing my killer meatball movie and plugging my latest project, *Stiletto*, with the shameless bravado of a young Richard Branson. We enjoyed some inane banter and wisely left each other wanting more, and I was happy to be asked to submit something erudite to this tome in my capacity as a filmmaker. Yes a filmmaker! A disappointment to my mother who had hoped for something sensible but a natural outcome for a boy raised on Star Wars and Hammer Films (oh yes, I'm a Brit. Apologies for the White House burning, we'll try harder next time).

Which brings me to my current status, and the afore hinted at dilemma.

As is the case in most low budget indie films these days, the biggest battle is the financing, and though we had funding secured for *Stiletto*, we quite literally saw the bigger picture and decided to put it on hold until we could double our funds. In the meantime we still had an

investor keen to work with us and so the next project was chosen. What genre can be made with little or no name actors, a minimal cast and locations, be put together fairly cheaply, and still guarantee a minimum 400-500% return for the money boys? Yup, a horror film. Thankfully I had three horror film treatments floating around so I pitched them all, and the investors went crazy for one of them. Herein lies the dilemma that has been dangled before you like a buttered carrot on a stick (for the more discerning donkey).

This new project is outrageously horrific. It is gory, twisted, sick to its core and one might say, obscene. In fact it could easily fall into the sub-genre being touted by trendy reviewers in the know as *Horror-Porn*. This new moniker is still in its infancy however, and being applied to films such as the *Saw* franchise, the *Hostel* (soon to be) franchise and other titles such as *The Hills Have Eyes*, *Wolf Creek* et al (which, despite Roth's grubby fumbblings in the first half of his opus, were all relatively porn free). Herein lays the dilemma (finally!).

Now, I love an extreme horror film as much as the next dubious individual, but I am strongly opposed to kids under 13 seeing this material. I have brought these issues up on the mature and reliable boards at IMDb, only to be shouted down and called a 'wuss' or a 'pussy' by the rest of America that claims not to have been affected by all the slasher films they watched when they were six. So here I am. On one hand I will be making a terrifyingly disturbing film that would make Takashi Miike wet his pants, on the other hand, if we manage

to get a theatrical release (not impossible), then I know that there will be moronic parents dragging their young nippers in to see it because a night of mental scarring is cheaper than a baby sitter. I don't care what my IMDb detractors think, I was a primary school teacher for 12 years, and I saw plenty of fucked up kids whose idea of writing a creative story involved rape and murder. A far cry from my creative stories at that age (which invariably involved a squirrel losing his nuts, early childhood castration issues – I blame Dr. Who).

Bottom line is, movie making is a business. The ratings board is never going to have a sensible system where kids are denied entry to R rated movies, as long as the major studios have them in their pockets. So what will I do? I will make my horror film, let it be cut a little for theatrical distribution, then let the uncut version get released on DVD where it is even more easily attainable by minors. You hear that heavy thump? That's my conscience bitch-slapping itself.

Neil can be contacted at n.j.baker@gmail.com, but please don't email him just to call him a wuss or a pussy.

