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LLOYD KAUFMAN

WITH SARA ANTILL AND KURLY TLAPOYAWA



**Direct Your Own
Damn Movie!**

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Lloyd Kaufman
with Sara Antill and Kurly Tlapoyawa

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This book is lovingly dedicated to Patricia Swinney Kaufman, who has lovingly directed her own damn husband for 35 years.



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Foreword (Maybe Backward)

by Mark NevelDine and Brian Taylor

We made our own damn movie, and we think it's smart of Lloyd to tell you to make your own. Seriously, who the fuck else is going to make it? It's on you, your deal, your responsibility to the independent thinkers of the world. Lloyd and his many partners (both sexual and professional) have made a career of making their own damn films.

To steal a quote from somebody who I'm sure said something like this, we ask,

"Who isn't a fan of Troma films??"

Simple . . . people who have never seen a Troma film. Watching a Troma flick is the perfect solution for a stressful world. When you go to the Troma spa, you can bathe in a soothing vat of warm puke and chunky blood. Sounds of murder will dance in your head, and the political undertones will half-bake in your cerebral cortex. We stand here today, not only as two fans of Troma Films, but as two of its unlikeliest soldiers — a directing team who makes movies for the studios (at least for now).

NEVELDINE:

It's 1996 and I'm auditioning for what will become the cult classic (yes, I abuse the term loosely, like my stool) *Tromeo & Juliet*. I was thrilled like a gay man at Fubar at my chance to work with the people who created *The Toxic Avenger*, *Class of Nuke 'Em High*, and *Sgt. Kabukiman, NYPD!*

After preparing my overly dramatic monologue for five minutes and fixing my hair for two hours, I stepped in front of some young filmmakers and spewed out my shitty prose. I finished, wiped my

forced tears, looked up, and waited eagerly for the response. The young man at the table said, “You’re really great. . . . TOO great . . . we’re looking for something else.” I blew it. My big shot and I were too fuckin’ great. The next day I bought a video camera and started calling myself a DP (director of photography). I always like using the term “DP” because of the connotations—like Dumb Person. I thought, “I’ll show these pricks how too-fuckin’-great I am!”

Cut to five years later in LA where I met my writing/directing partner, Brian Taylor, who also apparently called himself a DP (but actually was) and we created the greatest industry scam known as neveldine/taylor . . . we put my name first because I have low self-esteem. Brian says it was because it was in alphabetical order, but I’m unable to confirm this at the time of print.



FIGURE FM1 Brian Taylor (left) and Mark Neveldine (right) visit Lloyd Kaufman (middle) as he completes his 337th hour of community service along Route 95.

TAYLOR:

Reading Neveldine’s account of his failed Troma audition, I can’t help but wonder why he didn’t just skip all that “acting” nonsense and start blowing choad? He was a shoe-in for the part, and knowing Lloyd, those alligator tears would’ve been all too real. But then again, maybe that’s what Lloyd is trying to teach us in a nutshell: *suck your own damn dick.*

Lloyd Kaufman is a hero in this bizarre business of moviedom. In a system corrupted and polluted by compromise, politics, and straight up pussy-mopping cowardice, Lloyd has none of it. He's a true independent — a maverick if you will. His lineage includes all the great names of fetish-driven nutcase exploitation — Russ Meyer, John Waters, Herschell Gordon Lewis, Mel Gibson. . . He does exactly what he wants and challenges us to love and devour it. Which, of course, we do.

All of the contributing writers in this book (all more talented than us) guide you along a spiritual path to the holy land — the land where you have a completed movie that you can brag about to your high school friends. So how did we do it? Well, we came up with our own damn idea, we wrote our own damn treatment, then we wrote our own damn screenplay, then we directed and camera-operated our own damn movie.

We had the pleasure of finally meeting the brilliant Lloyd Kaufman at the 2007 TromaDance New Mexico Film Festival. One of our stunt men, Kurly Tapalapaloosa-something-or-other made the introduction and Brian and I were quick to ask Lloyd to star in our feature film, *Game*. After long negotiations and sweaty nights, Lloyd agreed and we shot his whole starring role in about two hours. Lloyd's desperate-for-an-Oscar performance for *Game* was so powerful that we immediately cast him as the soon-to-be legendary Maintenance Worker #1 in *Crank 2*. Let's just say that if these two movies are ever released, Lloyd will have to change his e-mail, and maybe his sex.

So this is the foreword or backward that we have written in honor of some of the greatest damn flicks of all time — all written or directed or produced or simply inspired by the mad genius Lloyd Kaufman. A truly compassionate man (or possibly woman) who is one of the funniest, most charming, coolest people we've ever met. Thank you for being you, Lloyd. Now go direct your own fucking movie! And if this foreword sucks, then maybe Stuart Gordon can re-animate it for us.

neveldine/taylor

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Foreword Part II

by Lemmy Kilmister

So here I am writing the "short sidebar" for Lloyd "Whoops-a-Daisy" Kaufman who is a fine upstanding loony, as everybody ~~knows~~ knows. I've been in some of his movies over '10, these many years, and I have always had a great time doing them. However, I always had only a v. sketchy idea of the plot, ~~except~~ except for 'Tromeo' 'cos I cheated and read the Shakespeare version. All in all, I think Lloyd's updated scenario worked better!

I will always respect Lloyd Kaufman's God knows he has not chosen an easy row to hoe (!) but his persistence struck a chord in me (as another annoying bastard who refuses to go away!)

And good luck to all who sail in him.
Love Lemmy LONDON July 2008

Hi Lloyd, hope you're fine etc,
I've done
what I propose as the first of 3 or 4 bits
which I suggest you dot about in different
places in the book? let me know what
you think of this idea.
love and sandwiches
by Stev



FIGURE FM2 Lemmy expresses his true feelings for Lloyd Kaufman.

Preface

Directile Disfunction

Explosive diarrhea. Perhaps not the most unglamorous phrase in the English language (“scrotal ringworm” is at least within spitting distance), but certainly not words befitting a major-league independent film director. But we’re talking about *me* here, and I’d just spent a long day on the set of *Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead* (the latest Troma blockbuster) wallowing in bucket-loads of excrement spewed forth from the substantial bowels of Joe Fleishaker.¹ In fact, I had been in Buffalo for a total of three weeks now, living in a rented church alongside 80 of my hard-working cast and crew, sharing one bathroom and a total of eight beds. The shit smeared across my suit was fake, of course. I’m all for saving a buck, but trying to collect that much real poop from the *Poultrygeist* crew would’ve meant feeding them something besides cheese sandwiches, and that cost a hell of a lot more than whipping up a sloppy mixture of chocolaty shit-like substance made out of whatever the production assistants could steal from the nearest A&P. Still, though, I’ve never heard any tales of Alfred Hitchcock wading through ankle-deep crap on his way to pin a stuffed bird in Tippi Hedren’s hair.

Such were my thoughts as I rode home from the *Poultrygeist* set in the Troma Team limo. The limo, of course, is a 1989 white Subaru I inherited after my mother passed away² and, since directing feature-length films is clearly such a lucrative line of work, it’s actually the first car I’ve ever owned. The worn interior was thick with the aroma of real shit, which was either psychosomatic on my part or was merely the swamp ass of my driver, Kiel. Like all members

¹Joe is our 500-lb action star who has appeared in Troma films since *Troma’s War* in 1986. He also plays my partner, Michael Herz, on DVD introductions and at conventions. Michael’s wife has never appreciated the humor there.

²My mother was the direct influence behind the Troma classic *Mother’s Day*, directed by none other than my far more talented brother Charles. Sadly, Charles has long since given up filmmaking and now owns a successful bread factory, Bread & Cie, in San Diego.

of the Troma production team, Kiel was sleeping in the commingled filth of the entire crew (sharing a room means more money on the screen!) and likely hadn't bathed or changed clothes in at least three weeks. As we zig-zagged our way through the normal collection of winos, dope fiends, and prostitutes that populate the streets of my beloved city, I began to contemplate the impending deadline for the preface to my latest book. A preface for which I've been having a hell of a time finding the right approach. The role of director weighed heavily on my mind as Kiel dropped me at my doorstep in Manhattan and sped off into the night. And by sped, I mean squealed away at the old Subaru's top speed of 38 mph.

Shuffling in the front door of my home, lovingly decorated with "I ♥ Tromaville High School" stickers, I found Pat, my lovely wife of 35 years, fixing what she likes to call dinner. As she carefully used an atomic scale to measure miniscule amounts of mayo and tomato across two pieces of Arnold's special pre-sliced plain white paper-thin bread, I breathed in the sweet smell of home.

"Don't get that stuff on the furniture," she said, looking askance at my shit-slathered duds. I looked down at my unwashed and rank clothing, feeling somewhat out of place in our living room, decorated with exotic African* art.

"You know what's a good movie?" I asked, as Pat cut into an incredibly fattening organic tomato. "*The Naked Prey*.³ I saw it again the other night and haven't been able to stop thinking about it."

"Who's in it?" Pat asked, deftly assembling her extravagant meal.

All I could muster in response to this painfully inconsiderate question was an exasperated "Doh!"

I adore my wife. She's the apple of my eye, the banana in my nose, and the fruit in my basket, but it was just like her to want to know who played the lead, instead of worrying about the *important* things.

"You should be asking who directed the movie, not who stood there reciting lines."

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Lloyd spent a year in Africa, specifically Chad, in the mid 1960s. See Lloyd's other, far better, book, *All I Need to Know About Filmmaking* . . . for all the dirty things he did to acquire his collection of African art.

³1966, starring and directed by Cornel Wilde, who also starred in the classic film noir *The Big Combo* (1955) as well as the beloved television movie *Gargoyles* (1972). It's very likely that Mel Gibson saw *The Naked Prey* before making *Apocalypto* (2006), as the two movies share some remarkable similarities, people in loincloths aside.

My wife, like countless others, couldn't care less about who directed the film she is viewing.⁴

"Cinema is the director's event." I loudly exclaimed!⁵

Pat took a bite of her sandwich, chewed thoughtfully, and swallowed. "I like to know who I'm going to be looking at for an hour-and-a-half, not who stood behind the camera and barked orders."

I felt myself trembling. Didn't she understand that the director is King, or Queen . . . or both? Without the director — without a singular, personal vision, a passion, a driving need to tell a particular story — the actors are merely window-dressing in the latest Hollywood crap-tacular! Creamy froth forming at the corners of my mouth, I actually began to sputter an explanation of the *auteur* theory to my brilliant and beautiful yet infuriating wife, then caught myself before I could get as far as mentioning *la nouvelle vague*.

Because, you see, in the case of *The Naked Prey*, Pat, as in most other cases, was right: who's in it was every bit as important as who directed it. The star, Cornel Wilde, *was* the director.

Come to think of it, Pat was very often right. Even when it came to things that I was supposedly the expert on, like film directing.

I stopped twitching and stared blankly at the thin tomato slice protruding from Pat's sandwich. Goddammit, now that I thought about it, several of the most consistently good film directors were also actors — Charlie Chaplin, John Ford, John Cassavetes, Clint Eastwood . . . and of course, I've done my share of prancing across the silver screen in many a cinematic classic.

"Are you okay?" Pat tenderly asked.

I nodded my head in response and started to head over to the fridge. Once again, I had learned something, even when I thought I had known it all. That's when it hit me — my beloved Patty-pie had unwittingly provided me with the solution to my preface problem.

⁴If you, dear reader, are one of these people, maybe you shouldn't be thinking about directing a movie at all. Unfortunately, I surveyed 800,436, 987 people regarding this matter and only 6 asked "who directed?" A damn shame.

⁵Immediately find yourself a copy of *The Director's Event*, an extremely useful and insightful book by Eric Sherman, featuring interviews with five significant directors: Budd Boetticher (*The Tall T*, *Seven Men from Now*), Samuel Fuller (*Shock Corridor*, *The Big Red One*), Peter Bogdanovich (*The Last Picture Show*, *Paper Moon*), Arthur Penn (*Bonnie and Clyde*, *Little Big Man*), and Abraham Polonsky (*Force of Evil*, *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here*). I believe it's currently out of print, but you can surely find it online.

Sure, I've been a motion picture director for 40 years, but in my own life — my *real* life, not the one where I have to squash heads, sever limbs, and bathe in fake shit — my astonishing wife was, quite clearly, the director. Time and time again, she had stood up to me and given it to me straight when I had my head so far up my ass that I couldn't see past my colon. It was her singular vision that was responsible for the production that was our life. Everything from the locations (our fabulous home), the cast (our lovely, talented, and indecently intelligent children), the props (every stylish item in our house), and even the postproduction (which I suppose would be our burial plots ...). The Kaufman world was a stage, and I but a player. My wife was calling the shots. And doing a ridiculously good job of it. I was about to smile and tell my lovely wife how very lovely she was, when I was struck by another thought. Just as Pat had directed me, Pat herself had been directed, in a sense, by someone named George Roy Hill. Pat had seen Hill's film *The World of Henry Orient* as a little girl, and had decided then and there to model her life after it.

And what about all the people involved in the making of that film? Who had George Roy Hill been directed by? Where did it ever end? I felt like one of the circles in the Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon game.

"Do we have any bacon?" I asked as I pushed aside a recyclable carton of soy milk.

"You don't even eat bacon," Pat said. "Why don't I put a slice of Swiss cheese on the sandwich you'll be eating when you get out of the shower ... "

Once again, the director is directed. I guess the *auteur* theory, which I will describe in minute and excruciating detail in the coming pages, isn't black and white. Even those with control issues, like me, can, in turn, be dominated themselves. And a fresh-faced kid like you? I have plenty of experience dominating ... er ... directing young people like you. Just remember that there are no exact answers in filmmaking. Some people, like the authors of other books, will tell you that there are. But there aren't. I don't think.

The ideas and wild right-wing conspiracy theories in this book will help you to direct a movie.

It won't necessarily be a good movie.

It won't necessarily be a hit movie.

It very likely won't win any Oscars.
But it will be yours.

So just think of this book as explosive diarrhea in print. Lap it up, spit out the chunks, and excuse the smell. Hopefully you'll get something out of it, and you'll be able to direct your own goddamn fucking movie. And when your movie is finished, maybe you'll get to experience the joy of looking back and wondering why the hell you made the thing. But at least you'll have done it. And I'll have made a couple of bucks. And by then, I also may have taken a shower and gotten rid of this shitty smell.⁶

xoxo
Lloyd Kaufman
aka "Unca Lloydie"
2008

⁶Neither making a couple of bucks nor taking a shower are guaranteed. Please don't hold me to the shower thing if you ever meet me.

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Michael Herz and Maris Herz, who have given my own damn life some direction over the last 35 years.

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And I'd like to direct a special thanks to the "Exit 47" sign on Route 95, which has provided me with some valuable and practical direction throughout the years.

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