

THE TYPE OF ZINE YOUR MOMMY WARNED YOU ABOUT

SIX MONTHS OLD, AND BARELY ABLE TO WALK...

Issue The Drink Tank 37

Participating in the 48 Hour Film Project



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My Ghod, What Have I Done?

This issue is much about M. She's doing most of the layout (and she's done a fair amount of my layout before, but now it's official). This one will lead into the WorldCon by those of us who aren't there reports that will be coming! There are more fun things to come.

***How Much Time A Film Crew Needs
The 48 Hour Film Project
by
Christopher J. Garcia***

It all started at Cinequest 2005. Ok, that's not true. It all started one day back

in 2002 when I was tired and hungry and it was raining while I watched shorts for the selection committee for Cinequest 2003. I had been watching shorts for a few days straight, skipping work and trying to catch up. I came across a tape marked Frequency Zero. I had no idea what it was, but it said that it was made as a part of the Reel Fast Film Project. The short turned out to be a musical about a country where all singing has been banned and a love story develops. It wasn't very good, not until I looked at the press kit and found that it had been written, shot and edited in the span of 48 hours.

Wow.

I had made a few films by that point, but still I had never thought that making a film could be a product that saw completion within a single weekend. I started looking it up and there were several places that did 48 Film contests (Reel Fast happened to be in Atlanta), and though I thought about doing it, nothing happened until this year's Cinequest.

Steve Sprinkles is my buddy. He's a tough cookie and a damn fine director. He went to see the 48 Film Project event they had at Cinequest and that started the ball rolling. He paid for the spot and we went to work getting ready to make a little movie.

I got the bright idea to have my place be the center of activity; the place where we would gather and get things done on the way to shooting. I worked hard to make sure everything was ready, that we had enough food to feed 30 people and made sure that the place was ready to accept everyone. We had a great staff, though we did make one mistake: we had three directors. I thought early on that this would lead to some trouble, mostly because I really do believe that a buggy only has one driver.

One of the ways that they make sure you made the movie the weekend of the contest is that they give you the genre you have to work in, a line of dialogue, a prop and a

character. You have to say the line exactly as they give it to you, which has led to folks being disqualified when they got one word off.

We gathered and Steve Sprinkles, the director of *The Chick Magnet* and *Last Woman on Earth*, got the stuff. We had *Mockumentary* as our genre, the line 'I'm craving something salty', our character was Nurse R Ramsey and finally our prop, a dried-up pen. We started working on a script while Steve was driving back from San Francisco to my house in Santa Clara. We had an idea about doing a thing on a company that collects brains in jars. I really liked that idea, but we ended up not doing it. When Steve got around, one of the other directors, Jimmy, had an idea that wasn't bad where a group of folks would go around and help people with free medical services, including surgeries and the like. They also happened to be completely incompetent. Funny stuff. Someone came up with the idea that the crew used to be a Motley Crue cover band called Dr. Feelgood. That's good comedy. I immediately thought that Frank Wu, with his freshly dyed red hair would make a great guy to play the drummer.

This caused trouble. When he walked in to the house, Steve thought that he had the look for it, Jimmy did not agree. For almost an hour

we fought over whether or not Frank would play the drummer. I fought for him, as did Steve. I tried to force a decision, thinking that since Steve was the team producer that he'd be the one to make the call, but Steve has always been about things being a team project and no one being a dictator. I like dictators since they do get things done. We ended up voting, which meant that Frank was out and John Chapman, the lead on the *Chick Magnet*, was in as the drummer. He did a great job, but I still think Frank would have done a great job. I was not happy, neither was Steve, but we went on and wrote the final script while I tried to get a little



rest.

When I woke up around 4:30 am, things had been written. I liked the script, though there was a lot left out, but it was funny stuff. The morning went kinda rough. We had no props until Kelley and Dan showed up with more connections than Ma Bell and hooked us up. We also had another blow-up about one of our actors not being available because he was doing a play that night. That was diffused and then the second trouble between Jimmy and Steve started. Jimmy had started working on shooting a segment that Steve had set aside for shooting at night. This rather annoyed Steve, who was not in a good mood because of it and he and Jimmy had a talk that you could hear through the double-thick glass doors. It blew over with a little help from Sean Becker, the guy who'll be directing my next short. We were on the way, shooting scenes and working well into the night. We did have some down time, which was nice since there was little sleep all around the cast and crew. We rested and we played games, we watched a movie, we ate. That was all we needed to keep us going. We shot well into the night, though I caught a little more sleep while they were shooting. Everyone got some rest and the whole thing

got finished in time.

Except we had trouble getting things on to MiniDV tape. We had to try a dozen different combinations before we made it work, but we made it work and work well. The whole thing was damn funny, especially the stuff that John and my former roommate Marin were doing. It was foul-mouthed and hilarious.

My worry of not having a single vision turned out to be needless since there was a single vision: the editors. They really pulled everything together, especially Becker's crew. We got some great stuff out of everyone, and I was dying when I heard how we presented the line of dialog with such a sense of urgency when a man's life was in danger.

There're so many other things. TV Dinners that came from a broken-down truck. A series of faux angers towards Mike Swingler. Several trampled plants in front of my house. A good spaghetti sause. So many things. So many things...



Cinequest, where they showed last year's 48 Hour Films

EVERYTHING EXCEPT GLUTTONY

by

Frank Wu

For "Saving Pockets" I got to play a homeless man. It was a profound experience, as I'm all about weighing down frivolity with unnecessary and unwanted injections of politics and religion. Thus, in the fifteen-second scene I'm in, we manage to address six out of seven of the deadly sins.

In my segment, homeless people are sitting in a row (Deadly sin the first: Sloth). We await medical care, and I have gathered stuffed animals unto myself - I'm homeless because I spent all my money on toys (#2: greed). The girl next to me, Sharon Salazar, starts coming onto the guy next to her (#3: lust). I am envious (#4) and put my hand on her thigh to get some attention, attempting to seduce her with my one and only line: "I have 83 beanie babies." (A line borrowed from Adbusters magazine.) The guy next to me, Paul Trask, shouts that the sucky magazines in the waiting area are for babies (#5 anger and #6 pride). Then the girl tries to grab my toys, and we tussle as Paul shouts more.

Six deadly sins in fifteen seconds. Not bad.

THIS STRANGE WORLD'N COMING

Some things happen by divine inspiration. One such thing is the idea I had while thinking about all those folks who were going to Interaction and leaving the rest of us behind. I figured that doing something fun might be a good idea, so I came up with the plan to do WorldCon: By Those of Us Who Aren't There, the first WorldCon Newszine with no one attending the actual WorldCon. The goal? To dispel the rumours and conjecture that are floating around with different Rumours and Conjecture.

I'll be joined by Cheryl Morgan, Hugo Winner and someone much too good to be working with the likes of me, as well as usual suspects M and Jay. Should be fun.

A Very Short Story

The Hit

They had done it right. So seldom are mob hits done in a style that would have made that Gambinos proud. One shot, perfect, through the forehead. No messy viscera all over the car. just a trickle of blood at either end, easily concealed for an open casket.

The Collector. They had finally got to The Collector. He had been on the run, what, five years. The boys had scoured the world looking for him. They had found almost all of the Boss's stuff, all the action figures, every one of the Star Wars ships that he had taken before he high-tailed it out to wherever it was that he ran.

And now he was dead, surrounded by junk in a car made in a country where you have to wait in line for toilet paper. It was almost sad, but he still had one last figure from the boss's collection.

"Let's roll," Vinny called out "leave the gun, but take the Kenobi."



The True Story of Human History or A Review of Monkey vs. Robot

How much can be said of human history being a battle between man and his tools. The tale of Kasparov vs. Deep Blue is exactly that. But taking the battle internally, you can see that we are all just Robots trying to make the world an improved place while battling our interior Monkey, which just wants to run wild. The battle is shown in the short film *Monkey vs. Robot*.

Monkey vs. Robot started out as a song by Comic Book artist and musician James Kolchalka: Superstar. It starts as a fuzzed-out guitar metal light-metal tune. The song tells the story of the Monkey, who lives in the Jungle and the Robot, who works in the factory. The story is that the two of them are bitter enemies and must fight. That's the back bone of *Monkey vs. Robot*.

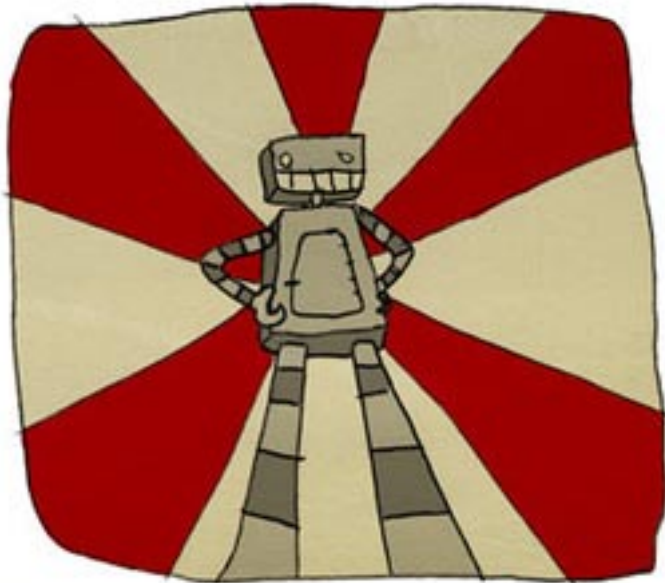
The lyrics say things such as
Why can't we all get along
Would that be oh so wrong?
Why can't we all love each other
Monkey and the robot brothers

That's an important segment as it talks to the human condition. The Monkey, our need for freedom and peace in our environment, has to fight the Robot, our need to conform to a set programme and follow the instructions that living a a society

that demands certain conditions be met. It is this conflict that exists in all of us and when we are presented with a cartoon version of the two sides of ourselves, we are drawn to them and incredibly moved by the idea of the battle between these distinct archetypes.

Then there was my reaction to it. The first time I saw it at Spike & Mike's Festival of Animation, I full-on rocked the Hell out! It was the song, that catchy piece of faux-metal that grabbed me and shook me all night long. The singer's voice, while somewhat goofy, was brilliant. It was an intellectual's voice delivering lines that were pseudo-intellectual! Woohoo!

Monkey vs. Robot is good clean fun, and in addition to the animated version, there are a few live-action versions as some film school required their students to make one. Any of them are highly entertaining.



Mommy, Where Do Robots Come From?: A True Story

Evelyn Aurora Nelson is six years old and she'll not let you forget it. She's a smart kid in some ways, especially those that involve anything about performing or movies or television or music. In many ways, she's just like me, though of no relationship other than the fact that I date her Mommy. One night, right after we had finished watching some SF show, quite possibly Star Wars, Evelyn decided she didn't want to go to bed,

so she started asking questions. She had long ago learned that when adults hear a kid beign intellectually curious they are more likely to let them stay up late. Evelyn has played this card many times, and while I normally still put her to bed, this time she hit just the right spot.

"Chris, what kind of robots are R2D2 and C3PO?" she said in her little voice.

"Well, they're droids, little girl." I answered.

"What are droids?" She asked.

"Well, in Star Wars, droids are robots that are built for specific tasks, like the binary languages of Binary Loader Lifters."

"What's that?"

"I don't know. It might be for making water into steam or maybe it's used to make water safe to drink" I said.

Evelyn looked at me with her big brown eyes. I thought she was done, so I was about to say 'time for bed, little one', but she turned to her Mom.

"Mommy, where do Robots come from?" she said with all the eagerness of a youngling asking about the Birds and the bees.

Gen, a mom now for six of her 28 years, seemed stumped, and looked to me for the answer.

"Well, they're built in factories."

"By who?"

"By people, I guess. Like those people on that show where the robots fight."

"What about other robots? Do they make robots to do work for them?"

"People programme them to make other robots."

"Do they make robots by lying down, like Mommies and Daddies make babies?"

I looked at Gen with a 'I didn't tell her' look.

"No, they use big machines."

"Oh." Evelyn said.

"Go brush your teeth, little girl." I said and Evelyn was off to the bathroom.

She came back a couple of minutes later.

"Chris, will robots hurt me?"

"Only if you try and play God." I said.

The Unified Theory of Fandom.

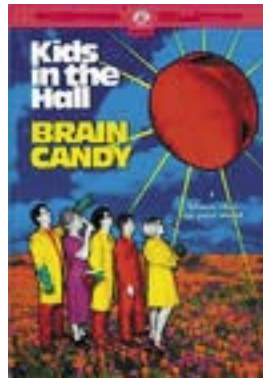
This isn't actually an article, more of an investigation. I've been reading about the numbered fandoms (that some say goes up to six, and others seven) and I'm always amazed at how dated it seems. A few months ago, I started thinking about it, trying to figure out somehow to update it and make it ring true through to today. First thing, the distinct divisions that were made by Jack Speer. I've agreed to write an article outlining fandom changes via stages which I'm calling the Unified Theory of Fandom. It's a terrible title, but I like it. Basically, I'm thinking of the major, fandom changing events that really shook things up and left a different fandom than before. I'm thinking that there have been eight stages so far, but maybe I'm wrong.

Anyone have a list of events that they think truly changed fandom forever? I've come up with 8 shattering events and 2 others that I could argue, but I'm not sure. Such is the difficulty of original research.

The Tale of Two Films: Side Effects and Brain Candy

There are only two films that I've ever seen that deal with the Pharmaceutical industry. One is an uproarious comedy from those tricksters of the Great White North, The Kids in the Hall, and the other a romance film called Side Effects that was made by a friend. The two films looked at the situation in completely different ways, but there's still a lot to look at in both of their views of the drug industry.

Brain Candy is the story of a scientist, Chris Cooper, played by Kevin McDonald, who creates a drug that makes people remember their happiest memory. He creates the drug and the company, which was doing poorly after the success of Stummies, a massively popular drug whose popularity petered out. The marketing wing of the company pushes Cooper to put the drug out, which he does, not having done



enough research. Pretty quickly, the users seem to find themselves in comas. This leads to a nightmare of negative publicity and they try and make it into a positive by having Comatoriums for the people. It's a strange look at things, but there's a ring of truth to much of it. At one point, they outsell penicillin, which is the ultimate in the world of drugs.

Side Effects (one of four films with that title) debuted at CineQuest this year. It had a few problems, and I believe they said that it wasn't 100% finished, but it had a remarkably strained and nuanced performance out of Katherine Heigl (Roswell and Grey's Anatomy) as Karly, a woman who takes a job with a drug company. She's modeled on director Kathleen Slattery-Moschkau, who did just that after leaving college. They start to run out a new drug and Karly, who hates the dishonesty and money-grubbing of the firm, starts bagging it, telling the truth more or less, as she's trying to get fired. Like in most of these kinds of movies, the straight talk works and she becomes a big seller. This leads her to getting promotions and being groomed for the top spots, as well as likely displacing the supervisor she hates.

Ultimately, Side Effects is about a love triangle with Karly having major issues not only with her job, but with a guy too. It's interesting, but the section about the selling is far stronger than the love story. I'd say that Heigl is the strongest part of the film, though there are some nice script choices.

The theme that both put forward is that drug companies are always selling themselves as helping people, but they are willing to jump through magic hoops to make a good quarter. Both films are worth watching, though they feel a little too true.



Emailed Words of Comment sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org by our Gentle Readers

Let's Start this Party right with Captain Jack Avery!

Chris:

You publish the Drink Tank faster than I can compose eLocs.

My friend M is already starting to put together a collection of my 2005 work called Year of the Hyperactive Typing Fingers.

I enjoyed your article on convention crashing in Boston, it reminded me of my younger days in Las Vegas doing a bit of convention crashing myself.

I took electronics in high school for two years. Didn't learn much except how to wire capacitors in backwards and blow them up. But our instructor had set up a fake electronics firm so that his students could get free badges into the Consumer Electronics Show. This was always a fun experience.

During my junior year, I and a friend were turned away from the Adult Video section that was always held at the Sahara, but during my senior year, I and a fellow student managed to infiltrate. He was a tall guy and looked like he could be 21, while I had already grown a full beard and could pass for an adult as long as nobody was paying too much attention. We had a great time, and earned lots of respect from our fellow students when we returned with signed photos of porn stars and tales of the stripper booths. I've never been good at it, but the other guy had a great line of bullshit. He came up with this story about how he had his wallet stolen and managed to get a lot of snuggles from the sympathetic hot porn stars. Ah, that was

fun. Even though I've never seen any of her movies, I still have a fondness for porn starlet Nikki Charm because of this little experience.

Wow, y'all were playing in the Big Leagues at a young age. I don't think I could have handled the Vegas scene. There are big sharks in those waters (guys on the Deny Entry list typically have large sums on their heads). Ah, Nikki Charm. She was a wonderful worker. During the old Poker, Porn and Punk parties, she would invariably pop up.

A few years later, I discovered the usefulness of a press pass. I was a little surprised when I read that you "upgraded" a press pass to a regular badge, as I've always found a press pass to be the passport to lots of goodies. Of course, I usually attended large conventions where, as you note, the regular attendees are not given free drinks and food and such. If nothing else, access to the press lounge at a big trade show is worth it.

Press passes have an up and a downside. The conference was too small for a full-blown press room, and the banquet eating is usually closed to press. There are times when a press pass is invaluable, like at any of the situations where there are name people and you can scam interviews and snack with the folks. That's how I met John Stewart.

As a former member of the fourth estate, I actually had some legitimate press credentials and actually covered some of the conventions for real publications. In fact, my last professionally published article, more than a decade ago now, was when I used some old press credentials to get into the Consumer Electronics Show and wrote an article on video games for Animerica Magazine.

I've never had a real Press Pass, though I've gone as press to everything from Cons (WorldCon 1996 as an example) to Election Rallies (Woohoo, Gerry Brown!) to boxing matches.

Out of all the conventions I attended, I particularly liked the American Booksellers Convention where I found the anime distributors were anxious to give me screener copies once they saw my press badge. For some reason I didn't pick up many books there, but I was pretty busy actually doing interviews and writing copy on deadline. You know, actual work. Some conventions just weren't worth it, I once attended the Contact Lens Association of Optometry convention. Somehow I got an article out of that, but all I recall was how deadly dull it was. And there weren't any good freebies.

The trick to convention crashing is choosing the right convention. Food industry conventions are good, they'll always have lots of tasty samples. Trade conventions that are closed to the public are also good. Lots of the booths will have nice give-aways to attract conventioners. Entertainment industry conventions are a good place to pick up posters and trinkets.

If I were still living in Las Vegas, I think I'd make a point to crash the annual convention of theater owners where the studios roll out their movies and try to get them booked. Never been to that one.

Went to a Theatres Owners convention back in the 1990s, but the East Coast version and not the National convention. NATO, I think the group is called. Good stuff with lots of little break-outs. I saw ID4 and a couple of other clunkers.

I thought it was a great idea you had to research the topic of the convention beforehand so you could pass as a legitimate member of the convention, but as a reporter, you can avoid that.

With a press badge, it's accepted that you don't know diddly about the subject of the convention. If you can affect the proper world-weary, "I'm just here because I my editor sent me" attitude, all the better. If you have a press badge, you need to show interest only in the booths that might give you good swag, or else every PR hack in the building will try to load you down with press releases and talk your ear off trying to get the name of their product into print.

I recall that the first week on the job as a reporter, I didn't have to buy my lunch once thanks to all of the press conferences and luncheons I was assigned to cover. I did get pretty tired of rubber chicken lunches pretty quickly though. There are old time former reporters who pretty much live by the convention and press conference circuit. One of my fellow reporters was at one of these events, a pretty swanky one with good food, and he happened to glance at the badges of some of his fellow "press". He saw badges for newspapers he'd never heard of. One old guy had a pass identifying him as a reporter from the Las Vegas Mirror. He mentioned to the guy that he thought the Mirror had gone out of business in the 1970s. The guy just put his finger to his lips and said "Shhhh".

Rule Number Two: Never Sell Out a Fellow Crasher. I've had my butt saved a couple of times by guys covering me.

Back in my convention crashing days, after I'd left the journalism business, I too found that it was pretty easy to fake credentials with a few handy business cards created for the occasion. I never did it very often, but on occasion I've used my typesetting skills and access to good copiers to make up a reasonable batch of cards for myself. Nobody really checks to see if you're who you say you are as long as everything looks on the up and up. Although lately I've noticed that with the proliferation of on-line "journalists" that things have tightened up. Some folks are now requiring clips or

printouts or letters on official letterhead. Of course, I could easily fake this stuff, but I find that it's more trouble than it's worth. I no longer live in Las Vegas, so the temptation to sneak into local conventions isn't there anymore. The Bay Area just can't compare with Vegas for quality of convention swag.

Damn straight.

I did use press credentials to get into two local cons this year. For Wondercon, I printed up some full-color business cards identifying me as the editor of Cosplay Magazine and printed out a high resolution copy one of my issues to "prove" I was a legitimate on-line journalist. The registration at Moscone Center is handled by convention center staff I think, which is always an advantage. If the registration is handled by the convention staff, they are much more likely to balk. If the registration personnel do it full time, then they really don't care, it's just a low-paying job and it's nothing to them if they register somebody as press with less than stellar credentials. A plausible story and a little backing documentation and it's easier for them to register than to argue.

FanboyPlanet had a tough time this year with getting folks in to WonderCon. The year before, I literally walked up, said "I've got passes waiting for me." They said OK, when they couldn't find them, they simply handed me two tickets and said "Sorry, we must have lost them."

I also got into RECCAcon on a press badge. That was even easier. I just walked up to registration and asked for a press badge and they handed me one.

Of course, I really did publish five issues of Cosplay magazine, and I did cover both conventions for the California Cosplay Times, so I don't feel so bad about getting into those conventions for free. If I ever stop GAFIAting, I might even run con reports in

a zine at some point.

And now that we what that zine is (SF/SF) we can all support you by sending all sorts of con reviews and so on. Plus, we'll figure a way to deGAFIAtate you sometime. We have very powerful tools at our disposal.

The only time I've ever been questioned about a badge was when I had a perfectly legitimate one, fully paid for. Last year at Silicon I attended evening programming on a night badge and got hassled by one of the SMOFs who questioned its legitimacy. Once I'd convinced him that I had indeed paid for admission, he tried to hard sell me on upgrading to a regular badge so I could attend the next day. I had no intention of driving two hours home and then returning the next day, I'd only attended in the first place as I had been in the neighborhood on other tasks and had an evening free. A disagreeable experience and one that put me off attending that con again.

I'm rather shocked, and at the same time, not at all. I've worked with Silicon a little, as a panelist and this year coordinating the judges for their little film festival. They were pretty laid back last year, though there's always that one person whose had a bad day and is going to snap. I could see why that would put you off a con. I don't know why, but I've never had a problem except when I've tried to enter The Dealers Room. I was stopped this you because I forgot my badge in my room at BayCon. Of course, I was Toastmaster, and the girl who was checking badges had been in charge of wrangling me the day before, so I was a little miffed, but I understood.

Anyway, keep up the good work.

Sincerely, Jack Avery

You just keep putting out SF/SF!