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# SXSW '07 Interview: "Scott Walker: 30 Century Man" Director Stephen Kijak

by **Erik Childress**

**The "Scott Walker: 30 Century Man" Pitch: A film about the legendary Scott Walker: The man, the enigma, the songwriter, the pork-puncher.**

**Tell us about your own history with discovering Scott Walker.**

**STEPHEN:** First discovered him in 1990, the first pressing of the "Boychild" compilation on CD from Fontana Records. Obsession set in shortly thereafter.

**How did this film get rolling at the beginning? Give us a brief history from writing to production to post to just last night.**

**STEPHEN:** By the sheer force of my will. A totally independent production. I faxed his managers in 2001 with this crazy idea. Three years later they agreed. Spent two and a half years on and off in London shooting, waiting for opportunities to shoot Scott, which is like waiting for a date with a Yeti, but we finally got what we needed. World premiere October 2006 in London. Last night? The work never ends, was probably processing "Scott Walker" tee-shirt orders (they're a very popular item by the way...)

**As a festival veteran, let us know your favorite and least-favorite parts of the ride.**

**STEPHEN:** Favorite? I'd say that first screening at a major film festival. Our first Berlin Film Fest screening for this was heaving, 500+ people, and the sound was really, really great. And then we nipped off for champagne and nibbles in the VIP lounge and I met Lauren Bacall. Doesn't get much better than that. Least favorite? Day two after coming home, you still haven't unpacked, and you realize you've been drunk for 72 hours in a row.

**Back when you were a little kid, and you were asked that inevitable question, your answer would always be "When I grow up I want to be a ..." what?**

**STEPHEN:** An enigmatic crooner. Oh well...



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**Not including your backyard and your Dad's Handycam, how did you get your real "start" in filmmaking?**

**STEPHEN:** It was less boring than my journalism major so I switched. Total accident. Got lucky by having Ray "John Cassavetes expert" Carney as my first film professor. That kicked the door open for sure.

**Do you feel any differently about your film now that you know it's on "the festival circuit"?**

**STEPHEN:** Given the reaction of the audiences thus far, I feel less terror and a bit of fatherly pride.

**Of all the Muppets, which one do you most relate to?**

**STEPHEN:** Definitely one of those two grumpy old men in the balcony.

**During production did you ever find yourself thinking ahead to film festivals, paying customers, good & bad reviews, etc?**

**STEPHEN:** Always. I actually imagine arguments/fights with people who write bad reviews.

**If you could share one massive lesson that you learned while making this movie, what would it be?**

**STEPHEN:** Always be able to have a laugh and a pint with your colleagues - it's just a movie after all - the process is almost more important than what happens afterwards.

**What films and filmmakers have acted as your inspirations, be they a lifelong love or a very specific scene composition?**

**STEPHEN:** Lynch. Cassavettes. John Waters. Maysles ("Grey Gardens"). Agnes Varda ("The Gleaners" being a recent mindblowing inspiration)

**Did you watch any movies in pre-production and yell "This! I want something JUST like this ...only different."?**

**STEPHEN:** Not for this.

**Say you landed a big studio contract tomorrow, and they offered you a semi-huge budget to remake, adapt, or sequelize something. What projects would you tackle?**

**STEPHEN:** Remake: Arthur Hiller's "Nightwing", Adaptation: Martin Pousson's "No Place, Louisiana", Sequelize: The X-Files Movie: 2.

**Name someone associated with your film that's absolutely destined for the big-time. And why, of course.**

**STEPHEN:** My producer Mia Bays, aka "Bay-Lo." She nabbed an Oscar for her first film, you do the math!

**Finish this sentence: If I weren't a filmmaker, I'd almost definitely be...**

**STEPHEN:** An enigmatic crooner.

**Who's an actor you'd kill a small dog to work with? (Don't worry; nobody would know.)**

**STEPHEN:** James Dean.

**Have you "made it" yet? If not, what would have to happen for you to be able to say "Yes, wow. I have totally made it!"**

**STEPHEN:** I hope I never "make it", i prefer the constant lurch towards chaos.

**Honestly, how important are film critics nowadays?**

**STEPHEN:** No offense, but since Metacritic, IMDB, and Rotten Tomatoes reduce everything to percentages, stars and splats...I fear it is a dead art. There are SO many of them they drown each other out with all the chatter. And sadly, they can still sink you.

**Who do you admire on the music scene these days?**

**STEPHEN:** Neko Case. Scott Walker. Richard Hawley. Genesis P. Oridge (hell yeah to the Throbbing Gristle reunion)

**Is there anyone on the film or music scene that you believe has either sold out and would wish would take a Walker-esque journey to rediscover the path of being a great artist?**

**STEPHEN:** Johnny Depp has to stop making cartoons and get deep and freaky. You know he has it in him. Maybe if he listened to "The Drift"...

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**You're told that your next movie must have one "product placement" on board, but you can pick the product. What would it be?**

**STEPHEN:** Guinness.

**What's your take on the whole "a film by DIRECTOR" issue? Do you feel it's tacky, because hundreds (or at least dozens) of people collaborate to make a film – or do you think it's cool, because ultimately the director is the final word on pretty much everything?**

**STEPHEN:** I'm on the fence. I don't particularly like it actually.

**In closing, we ask you to convince the average movie-watcher to choose your film instead of the trillion other options they have. How do you do it?**

**STEPHEN:** How could you possibly pass up a film about a man who once had a compilation of his music released called "Fire Escape in the Sky: The Godlike Genius of Scott Walker".

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Stephen Kijak's **Scott Walker: 30 Second Man** will have its North American premiere at the [2007 South By Southwest Film Festival](#) on Tuesday, March 13 at 7:15 pm and screen again on Thursday, March 15 at 1:45 pm (both at Austin's Alamo Drafthouse Downtown.) And check out [BSide.com](#) for even more info!



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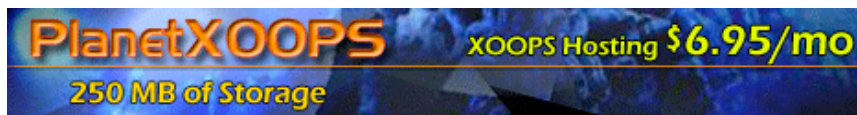
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