

INTERVJU MED MANUSFÖRFATTAREN CHRISTOPHER WOOD, MAJ, 2012

Intervju av Anders Frejdh, redaktör för From Sweden with Love, med hjälp från Enlil Albanna, journalist och projektledare för Cinewebradio i Frankrike.

Could you tell us about the reasons why you chose to become a writer and screenwriter?

I was a frustrated advertising executive interested in cinema and the arts generally. I watched TV and groaned 'I could do better than that.' My wife said 'Why don't you?' After some TV ideas were turned down I started writing a novel on the train commuting to work. It was published. A new life had started.

I believe *Seven Nights in Japan* was your first film with Lewis Gilbert. How did you initially meet him? Could you tell us about him and this first experience on a movie?

Lewis mentioned to my agents that he was looking for a writer. They recommended me. For *SNIJ* I would drive to his home and we would discuss the story and its development - and many other things. Lewis is a warm, friendly man, very easy to work with. Immune to pressure and tantrums. I talked to him on the phone only the other day about the good times we shared together.

The same year, you wrote the script for *The Spy Who Loved Me*. How did you get into the James Bond film adventures? Were you afraid to disappoint the fans' expectations of the franchise?

Lewis brought me on board the Bond adventure. I just wanted to do a good job - for everybody.

Could you tell us about how you wrote the script, and how you developed the story of the film? Tell us about the character of "Jaws". What was your ambition with him?

Jaws was in the script that I inherited. I saw him as more of a real menace than he turned out to be. Lewis spotted the humour inherent in his performance.

For the script, I worked with Lewis in London and we then discussed our ideas and what I had written with Cubby, Michael Wilson and, sometimes, Ken Adam.

In 1979, you returned to the Bond series. What is the story behind that?

TSWLM was a huge success so it was not unusual that the team behind it should be reformed for *Moonraker*.

Was it your decision to send James Bond all the way up to space? And were you afraid to turn the film into science fiction in any way? To what extent had the first *Star Wars* film an impact on you and the script? Why did you bring back the character of "Jaws"?

I did not like the premise of *Moonraker*. It seemed to me that we were copying *Star Wars*. I also found the idea of space slow in filmic terms. It is difficult to rush around in an astronaut's suit. Did I tell Cubby that his idea sucked? No.

It was Cubby's idea to leave the fate of Jaws open at the end of TSWLM. He was a popular character and certainly one of the most memorable heavies in the Bond series.

What are your memories of Albert R. Broccoli?

Cubby was a larger than life character and a generous employer. Everybody on the movie lived in style.

What do you feel about your involvement with Bond now?

I have no 'involvement' with Bond now other than one similar to that of an ex-player who once performed for a successful soccer team and who will always wish the club well.

Today, the James Bond films (Casino Royale, Quantum of Solace) have become more serious and darker, with less gadgets. I think they are the opposite of the James Bond films made in the 1970's, do you agree? What did you think of Casino Royale and Quantum of Solace, and of Daniel Craig as James Bond?

I am not shaken and stirred by 'new' Bond. The movies seem like imitations of the Bourne series and I find Daniel Craig, though a good actor, akin to a muscle-bound Hobbit. I miss the lightness of touch of the old Bonds and having shifted uneasily through Casino Royale was not tempted to see the next one.

You wrote scripts for several episodes of the series Lovely Couple. In what way is writing for the television different versus writing for the cinema? Any preference for one of the two?

Writing for TV is more restricting, especially compared to a Bond movie when you can do anything. But you have fewer masters to please and can be more of a diva. I prefer writing for the cinema because it is much better paid.

Could you tell us about Remo Williams: The Adventure Begins ?

As you know, the adventure did not begin with Remo. There are many reasons. Fred Ward is not a leading man, the high octane ending was dumped for budgetary reasons and - maybe the script and direction were not good enough.

Do you have an anecdote to share about your career?

Ironically perhaps, the best moment was walking on to a set of Confessions of a Window Cleaner for which I had written the script from my book and feeling a mixture of excitement and trepidation. The physical reincarnation of something that had only existed in my mind was immensely satisfying but I also had a sense that I was responsible for the investment entailed - supposing the movie was a disaster?

What is the best moment of your career?

There have been many good moments - and quite a few bad ones. Difficult to choose from a list of either.

What advice would you give to young people who want to become screenwriters?

Any potential screenwriter should see as many movies, of every type, as possible. He will learn what works and how it works - and discover lots of things he can steal.

What are your plans for the future?

I am preparing a travel book relating to the part of France where I have a home.

Have you ever visited Sweden and/or any of the other Scandinavian countries?

I have visited Norway - Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger - and Copenhagen. Never Sweden. One day, maybe.

The 'Millenium Trilogy' book series, written by the late Swedish author Stieg Larsson, have been very successful around the world. Have you read them or seen any of the films?

I am not acquainted with Stieg Larsson's work - one of the few people who can say that.

What do you think about the 'From Sweden with Love' website?

Anything that promotes a continuing enthusiasm for 007 must be good and that, of course, includes your website. From Sweden with Love seems to be comprehensive and packed with info. Keep it up!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME WITH THIS INTERVIEW, CHRISTOPHER.

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