Get a camera...
Get some stock...
Go shoot a MOVIE...
This edition of
The Guerilla Film Makers Handbook
is dedicated to Dad...

‘The surest way to succeed...
is to be determined not to fail...’
WV Jones
The Guerilla Filmmakers Handbook

3rd Edition

By

Chris Jones and Genevieve Jolliffe

assisted by Andrew Zinnes, Verity Budden, Jonathan Newman and Lucia Landino
We would like to thank all our Sponsors

Introduction

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the contributors in this book for sharing with us their experience and expertise, helping to shed light on how films get made here in the UK. We would also like to thank everyone who has helped Living Spirit produce its first three feature films; The Runner, White Angel and Urban Ghost Story, especially those who have supported us, both financially and emotionally, while navigating the shark infested, ship wrecked waters of low-budget film making. You were our life jackets.

To all those people who said it could be done, our sincere thanks for your encouragement.

Special thanks in particular for words of advice received on a running track all those years ago.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the following for their help in producing this book -

David Barker, you are sooooo coooool! Thanks for your unending patience and encouragement.

Special thanks also to all our sponsors, without whose contribution, this book would have been 200 pages thinner.

Thanks also to the film makers who sent us their photos for inclusion in the book.

Thanks also to Mums, Dads and families.

And Jim, thanks for your illustrations.
Introduction to the third edition

It’s been a decade since the first edition of the GFMH, and in that time so much has happened. Not least the expansion of the book you now hold, into this near 800 page behemoth! Like so many things in life, the big projects like movies and books, if you’d known how much work it would be, you’d think yourself crazy for even starting. It’s not about the first step, or the last, but about the ones inbetween. How much we learn from our experiences. It’s those experiences that guide us to the right and wise choice when opportunity manifests. And given the technological days we live in, no one has an excuse. You can make a movie. Go on, get your phone out, you can probably make a movie on that in the next 20 minutes!

Digital is here. Oh boy is it. And along with it, come welcome opportunities for new or cash strapped film makers... HD formats for under £1k, full blown post in your bedroom, online delivery is now coming fully online. But, these new bang whizzy tools and software have created a great deal of confusion. What is HD? Is HDV the same as HDCam? Can Final Cut Pro HD really cut HD? Does HD look like film? The answer to all of those questions is no. Well sort of no. Well with some tweaking and hard work and some experience and some expertise, then maybe yes. The problem faced by new film makers is the overwhelming world of possibilities that lead to endless choices. All too often, this confusion seems to distract people away from writing or collaborating on that AMAZING screenplay, and then attracting that GREAT cast, so they can raise REAL money to make a film that will enjoy a real life in the INTERNATIONAL sales arena. And worse still, the ease of access to this technology can breed a lack of discipline and creative laziness… ‘It’s just a camcorder after all, and they didn’t use a tripod in Blair Witch...’

Let’s be clear. There is nothing wrong with many of the new technological developments, it’s just that none of them make it any easier to achieve the things that really matter. It’s still really, really tough to write that amazing screenplay. And it’s the script that is the foundation of any movie. We all know that.

This book, even more so than ever, is about maintaining an aspirational dream worthy of the tremendous journey undertaken when making a film. About making a movie that will reach, touch, move and inspire wider audiences. About creating a film career that will sustain you and your loved ones. It’s about being a film maker and making movies.

So if you are reading this book now because you know, in the pit of your stomach, you have to take action, you have to make your movie, then we salute you! Go for it!

And remember, ultimately, playing safe can be the most dangerous path to walk.

Chris Jones and Genevieve Jolliffe
Introduction

The Guerilla Film Makers Handbook
Introduction to the first edition

It’s true that the road to becoming a successful film maker is a rocky, often bizarre and certainly unpredictable one. Neither of us expected to be writing the introduction to a book about film making on this hot July night, more likely our acceptance speech for the Oscar we would surely have been nominated for by now. That’s the first lesson. Film making can take a very long time. There are exceptions the press love to quote, but on the whole, carving out a career in film making is not dissimilar to mounting an expedition to tackle the North face of the Eiger.

During our first expedition into film making, we made many mistakes. After regrouping we discovered a small group of persistent wannabe first time film makers pounding at our door, asking questions, the answer to which we had learned the hard way only weeks before. To keep these potential movie makers from consuming our every waking hour, we compiled some notes about how we made our first film and what pitfalls could have been avoided. Soon after, due to great demand and overwork, our photocopier broke down. We realised then that there was a genuine need for a book about low-budget film making in the UK. Not some crusty manual written by a frustrated accountant, or an American guide that is so localised to Hollywood that it’s all but useless, but a book that tells how it really is in the UK, how it’s really done, what the penalties are, and what the rewards can be. And so, back in 1991, The Guerilla Film Makers Handbook was born.

If you have enough energy, half a brain and can convince enough people that you could be the next Orson Welles, you will become a film maker. Don’t be put off by ridicule, poverty (although that can be very tough) or fear. You can do it. You will do it. Good luck.

Chris Jones & Genevieve Jolliffe - July 30th ’96 (03.52 hours)

The Guerilla Film Makers Handbook
Introduction to the second edition

Since the GFMH hit the streets four years ago the film business has changed dramatically. Lottery money, the New Producers Alliance and perhaps in a small way, this book, have all paved the way for new film makers in the UK to make their voices heard.

Since the last edition we have made another feature film, Urban Ghost Story and like all movies it has been a labour of love. Again a Living Spirit production that was against all odds with a new set of problems, pitfalls and rewards. This time however the heavy doors of Hollywood have creaked open just enough for us to get our foot in.

In this edition you will see that there are a number of anonymous interviews. This is because we wanted the interviewees to be free to answer honestly, not politically as often that would put a person in a difficult position. So we have protected their identity.

Digital technology is also moving very quickly. It’s impossible to predict how things will change but a few guesses would include DVD style distribution, international sales across the Internet, digital cinema projection (meaning you don’t need a print) and most of all, origination on digital formats, of which DV is the cheapest and is accessible to all people. Undoubtedly, this liberation will spawn a plethora of dull and slow movies, but from this sea of mediocrity, a few unique film makers will rise. It’s up to you to be that person, that original film maker. Be vocal. Be heard. Make your movie.

Chris Jones & Genevieve Jolliffe - April 10th 2000 (23.13 hours)
The Guerilla Film Makers
10 Commandments

Thou shalt strive, every day and in every way, to achieve excellence! Only through excellence shall thy receiveth salvation.

Thou shalt cast from thine mind the phrase, 'it can not be done...'

Thou shalt shoot, while living in PAL land, at 25fps on film, or 25P on HD, irrespective of what other soothsayers advise. They be-eth wrong!

Thou shalt never work a crew more than 12 hours a day, or 6 days a week.

Thou shalt ask if in doubt. If not in doubt, thou shalt ask anyway.

Thou shalt make a film through the legal mechanism of a limited company.

Thou shalt disregard ridicule from friends and relatives.

Thou shalt shoot the best format available, be it Super 16mm film or HDCam. Cast from thine hand thine superduper camcorder, it is the device of the Devil!

Thou shalt shoot hundreds of high quality stills of the actors and action.

Thou shalt get the best deals by paying cash upfront.

Thou shalt respect the film makers who will come after thee. Never burnest bridges other may need to use.

Thou shalt always shoot at least two takes of every shot.

Thou shalt ONLY shoot when thine screenplay is Oscar winning.

Thou shalt cut thine movie, then recut, then recut, then recut...

(Yes, we know there are more than ten, but this is the GFMH Ten Commandments upgrade)
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What’s on the CD?

In the back of this book you will find a CD-Rom with a bunch of fun stuff on it.

The Guerilla Film Makers
Handbook PLUS!
Free on the CD is a bonus PDF document, a kind of extra to the book. It’s an A5 document so you can print it into a booklet (if your printer supports that). So what’s in it? There are interviews that we couldn’t fit in this edition, there are interviews pulled from the second edition (especially useful if you plan to post produce your movie the old photochemical way), lists, glossaries and a whole heap of other goodies. You will need the free Adobe Acrobat Reader to read this document.

Production Forms
All the forms in the Legal Toolkit Section are on the disk, saved in MS Word Format and ready for you to use on your productions.

Contracts
All the contracts in the Legal Toolkit section are on the CD also, again in MS Word. Thank goodness, can you imagine what it would be like if you had to type them all out!

Screenplay Software
There is our new Screenplay Formatting Software too. It takes all the hard work out of formatting your screenplay. It works with all versions of MS Word up to Word 2003 (on the PC), and for Mac, we are still updating. Check our website though as we release updates every so often. There is an extensive manual with Screenplay which we would recommend you take a look at.

Budget
The new Budget Software wasn’t quite ready to go on the CD, but visit our website and you should be able to download it from there when it’s ready.

Plus other goodies...

If you join our newsgroup on the website, you will get info about new stuff, launch parties, software and courses.

www.livingspirit.com
Quick Guide To Low Budget Movie Making

- Get a Great Idea
- ...add a great script
- ...add a bit of cash
- ...and add heaps of determination

Make a Movie and...
- it's a hit
- it isn't a hit

Bankruptcy
- Short holiday
- Make enough cash to survive before going back to square one

Hollywood
- the rest is history
This is a British Independent Feature film. Its UK theatrical release was cut short due to illegal DVD piracy. Its UK sales were SERIOUSLY damaged by illegal DVD piracy.

Next time it could be YOUR movie.
Protect our industry...
Protect your business...

If you see it, report it to FACT or the Police.
DON'T ASSUME SOMEONE ELSE WILL!
TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COLLECTIVE INDUSTRY,
FOR A PROSPEROUS AND SECURE FUTURE FOR US ALL!

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!

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