# AGGIELIFE

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sday, February 22, 2000

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mere \$7,000 to make and was picked up by Columbia Pic- to wait around. res for release. Ródriguez has since directed four highly acaimed films which include Desperado, From Dusk Till Dawn, adracers, and The Faculty. At a press conference held here Texas A&M Saturday afternoon, The Battalion was able to k the renowned director a few questions.

#### • Explain why you selected El Mariachi to screen • here at this festival?

Robert Rodriguez is an oddity in the film world. He stands

me for having made the smallest budgeted movie ever to be

I did not select it. They [the festival directors] selected it. hey told me to come and they were going to show Mariachi, and I was like. "Sure."

Talk a little bit about what the Texas Film Festival is trying to showcase here with independent films and talk a little about your experiences.

If they had told me to pick a movie, I would have picked lariachi because that's the one that I did by myself and it is he one that I find the most inspiring to people who want to be mmakers also.

I didn't think it was a real picture and the way I made it because it wasn't following the rules of filmmaking. It still came out and people still enjoyed it, and people still went to see it. I would use that as an example for people to show them how you can really bend the rules and make up your own rules as far as making an independent film. It can be anything you want, and at that time nobody was doing movies like that

It just goes to show that you can make it any way you want. A lot of people cite it as something they used as an influence on their careers.

### • What does that mean for you?

It's great for me because people inspired me. People like Spike Lee and Steve Soderbergh really made me think, "I should really be trying to do something." If I want to make it, instead of griping about what I don't [have], I should be fousing on what I do have.

• What ever happened with you not directing The • Mask of Zorro?

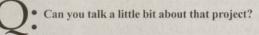
That was a project that had just been plagued for a long time. because they may not Before I had gotten on, it had been started up and stopped a few times. It was really difficult to get it going.

takes someone outsided. Each time you start a movie and stop it, that incurs cost. It rowell said. "[Bul] the was almost going to go. That studio was in a lot of trouble at

leaving the project was because everyone got fired — because they were not going to announce it for four months. So we had eased by a studio. His feature film debut, El Mariachi, cost to say [it was due to] creative differences. I didn't really want

> The period in between El Mariachi and Desper-• ado was when you directed Roadracers, right?

Yeah. I was looking for something small.



I wanted to take advantage of the downtime for me to go work with a film crew and practice with 35 mm. Someone offered me Roadracers, and I thought that was good. In a month's time I could write, shoot, direct and edit and get done with the whole feature and get some of that experience before going and doing Desperado. It was just to get some practice.

Do you have any more botched project stories • like The Mask of Zorro?

No, after that I was a bit wary of signing on before there was a script. Which was why I turned down some big movies.

• Do you have more fun doing your own projects • than doing some of the bigger stuff?

Yeah, because you can still make a really big movie. When you see the new movie, it's going to look huge. It only cost \$29 million, but it's going to look like \$100 million movie because I can control the costs

Tell us about the sequels for From Dusk Till • Dawn. Was that something you always wanted to do?

No. That's just the nature of the company. Dimension is very much of a sequel type place.

They have the movies that they make and if it is a title that will get the rental business, they will make a lesser videos for it and people always rent those. That's how some of the extra revenue comes in.

Quentin [Tarantino, director of Pulp Fiction] and I both feel like we are kind of helping build that company up. They wanted me to do The Faculty, so I was like, "OK, I'll do that." You let me do two kids movies and a Stevie Ray Vaughn movie, and I'll do that.

• You always talk about wanting to stay in Texas, what is that about?

## Director Robert Rodriguez

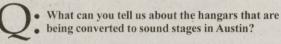
and they are just slugging around, in Texas everyone is still really excited to be working on movies. They are really enthusiastic. It helps because you are not having to go around and try to lift people's spirits.

. How do you feel about violence in the movies?

Well, I really never felt like I needed to be everyone's parent, but it does kind of bug you. That's why I am making Spy Kids - because I wanted something like Desperado

. a budget of \$7 million?

With Mariachi, I was limited with what I had and what I had access to. When you can do anything, that almost makes it more difficult. You are thinking, "I can do anything. Now what should I do?"



It's something we have been looking at for awhile. We've been wanting to put up some sort of studio space. I've been shooting in Austin for awhile, but I've had to rent out warehouses from people and it's a pretty high premium right now because everyone has occupied Austin.

It's really hard to get space that you can use as stages. So when the airport was vacated, they just had these hangars sitting around. They were going to mow them down, and it is going to take them 20 years to develop the site. So some of the filmmakers got together and tried to convince the city to allot a couple of them to sound stages.

We've been doing pretty good. I'm not sure exactly where it is [in the process]. We've got to make it more of a multi-cultural, multi-media center and get other media involved other than film. It would be a non-profit. Part of the money we make would go to renovating and upgrading the stages because they are not really stages right now, just warehouses.

We would like to attract more business there -keep the filmmakers there. A lot of the crews we have are really good. We've lost a lot of our movie business to Canada and other places. We hope it will attract business back to Austin.

• So will these be used for stuff other than just film?

It can be for film, commercial, multi-media, games.

• Is it going to be a big studio?

**ROBERT HYNECEK/THE BATTALION** film Austin, but they don't have a place to shoot interior set

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So, it's already going, you've already bought it?

scenes, so it drives a lot of business away.

We are not even buying it. They are just going to lease it to us and the money that gets made goes back to the city to develop the site after we're gone. It is only for an interim use, we'll only be using it for a few years until they need the space. We are not really putting money in, it is not a commer-

 Are you going to try to get some more time there • allotted?

Maybe if it works out; then we can probably keep it there longer. If the community likes it there and if it does everything we say it is going to do, then we are going to be giving a lot back to the community. Getting people in the area to come get internships, especially the East Side of Austin because that is where it is. We have a lot of things we want to do. If we don't, they can always get rid of us, but we are not putting a lot of money into it. Each production, instead of rent they would come renovate it. Put in air conditioning, put in soundproofing, leave something to make the stages a little better.

You seem very self-assured and very confident. In the filmmaking process, is there ever a moment when you experience self-doubt?

Yeah. There a lot of times when you are not sure. But you get to trust your instincts and sometimes it is hard. Sometimes you will cover yourself, and then you will find your original inspirational idea was right. After awhile, you know when you have a greater force driving you. I have seen filmmakers who, somewhere along the line, lose it, though. They are really hot for awhile, and then all their films start going down. It all comes back to self-doubt.

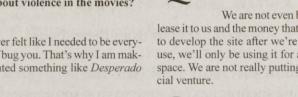
Can you tell us about the importance of coming to smaller festivals like this one, and the importance of having film festivals like the Texas Film **Festival?** 

I know that it really benefits a lot of people who come to these, and they want to learn something. A lot of time it benefits me just as much to come and talk about what you are doing. You don't really reflect on things that are past, and then, you look back and you are like, "Yeah. I really did do that all by myself." It makes you remember where you came from. It gives you more confidence in a way. You see what you did to what you are doing now.

that my kids could watch.

Can you talk about going from El Mariachi with

a budget of \$7,000 to a film like Desperado with



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They had experienced a long slate of disaster-type films, , treatment becomes at and it was almost time for them to all get fired by Sony. That was when it happened. Everyone got fired, but they weren't oing to announce it for four months.

So everybody was just sitting around, nobody really had nypower. The movie was just going to get shut down, and we vere going to have to wait. I could not say that the reason I was

When I was younger I never thought I would be a filmmaker because I didn't want to go to L.A. You feel vindicated when you can stay in Texas and make movies and never go anywhere.

What do you see for the future of Texas filmmak-• ing? Is there a point you don't want it to reach?

Unlike in L.A. where everyone is so jaded by the movies

It's really not even a big studio. I've never even shot in a real studio. I've always just used warehouses that we converted. But you build your sets and they are pretty soundproof. You need a space that is big enough, has enough parking and has enough freespan, which those do. No support posts, so you can build sets and shoot all your interiors. A lot of people come to So festivals give you the chance to reflect?

Yeah. You have a much better perspective of what happened to you later on. It makes you put all kinds of things together. It makes you think about where you are going. It's great to see someone's face light up when they get inspired by something.

### scar time marks Hollywood's own 'season of givin

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Is there anybody left and winners will be and in Hollywood who hasn't been nominated for some kind of award this year?

Entertainment awards are proliferating, with 332 ceremonies last year, up from 252 in 1997, according to the trade publication Variety

The industry has ovations and backslaps for directors, writers and cinematographers, and salutes for the best movie trailers, the best publicity campaigns and the best raising of awareness on social sues. Even the awards shows can win awards. The hoopla all builds up to Hollywood's grandest night, the Academy Awards, on March 26.

Awards by groups such as the Directors Guild and Screen Actors Guild offer a sneak peek at how some top Oscar categories might play out, while organizers of other ceremonies schedule their awards to feed off Oscar excitement.

"We definitely wanted to do ours before the Oscar nominations," said Laurie Silvers, president of the entertainment Website Hollywood.com, which presented its second annual awards for top movie trailers about two weeks before the Academy Award nominations came out last week. "We wanted people thinking about whether the best movie trailers have any association with the best movies.' Some of the award ceremonies this season:

-Faces and follicles get their due at the first Hollywood Makeup Artist and Hair Stylist Guild Awards on March 19.

Guild Awards chairman Alan Fama said movie makeup and hairstyles often are overlooked and the awards are meant to "bring attention to the fact that our work is not just for a beauty-shop clientele. You don't just spray an actor's hair and have them come back next week.

"We definitely wanted to do ours [awards] before the Oscar nominations."

> - Laurie Silvers President of Hollywood.com

Awards will be presented in such categories as contemporary and period hairstyling and specialeffects makeup. Nominated films include Sleepy Hollow, Tea With Mussolini and Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me.

-Positive social and moral messages in film and

TV will be lauded at the 23rd annual International Angel Awards, selected by two groups, Excellence in Media and the National Association for Family and Community Education. Contenders in the movie category include The Green Mile, The Straight Story, Music of the Heart and Runaway Bride.

-Animal welfare is the theme at the 14th annual Genesis Awards presented by the Ark Trust, a humane group.

The awards this year will include honors for the movie Instinct, which fosters respect for great apes, and the animated feature The Iron Giant, which includes a stark anti-hunting scene, said Ark Trust founder Gretchen Wyler.

-Four days before the Oscars, the 37th annual awards for best promotional campaigns will be held by the Publicists Guild of America. Nominated for best movie publicity efforts are American Beauty, The Matrix, Stuart Little, The Talented Mr. Ripley and Toy Story 2.

"Publicists are always the last to be recognized for anything," said Henri Bollinger, who heads the guild's awards committee.

Ceremonies themselves sometimes garner honors. The Oscar, Grammy and Tony broadcasts all won Emmys last fall, while last year's Oscar show is nominated in the TV musical variety category for the Directors Guild awards March 11. There are also awards no one in the industry wants to win. Several awards are for poor filmmaking.

The 20th annual Golden Raspberry Awards for the worst movies of 1999 will be announced the day before the Oscars. This year's nominees for the Razzies include the blockbusters Star Wars: Episode I-The Phantom Menace, Big Daddy and The Blair Witch Project.

