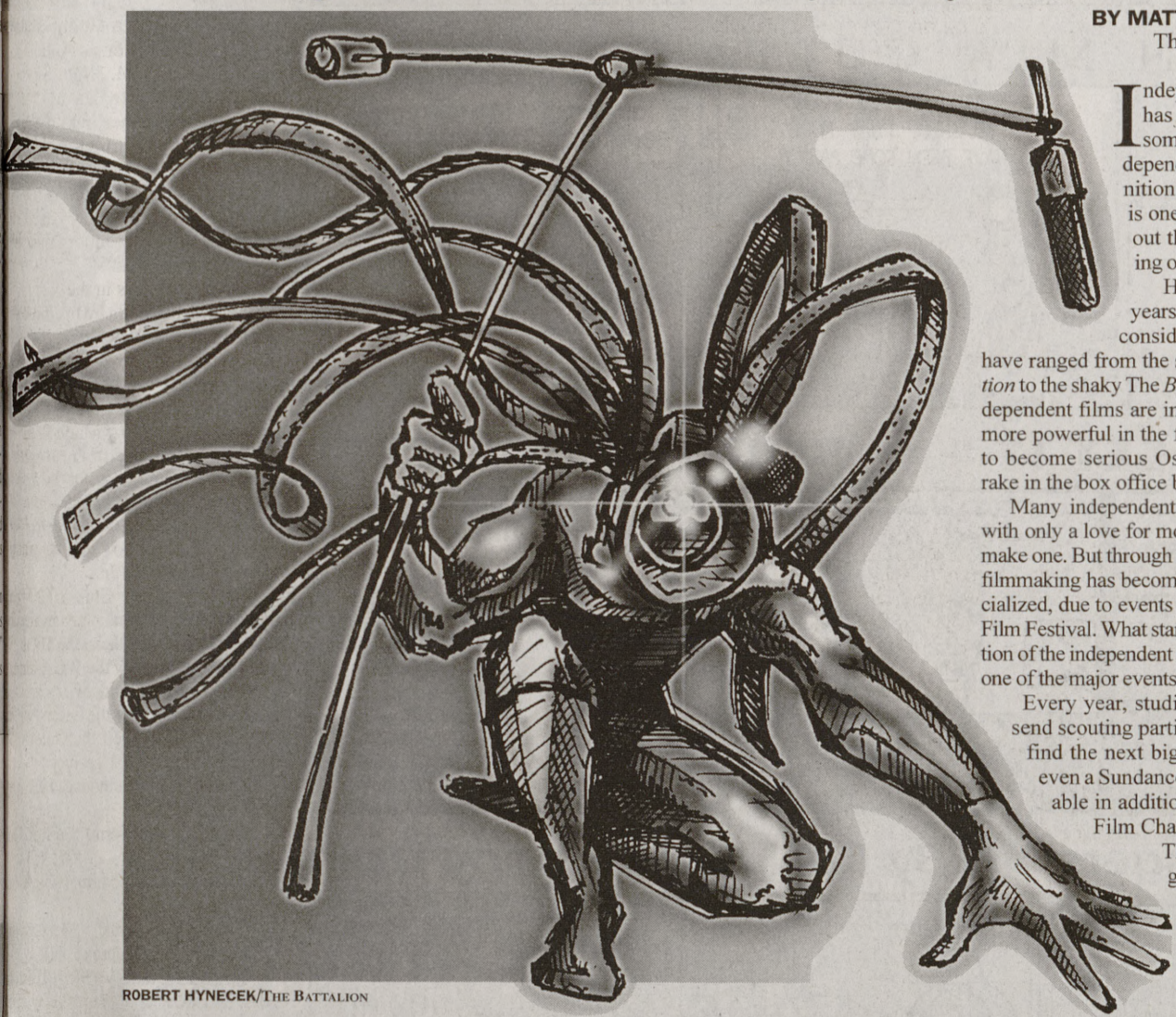


The future of film

Insight on independent films found in new technology and old resources

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ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Independent filmmaking has become a big and, some might say, not so independent process. By definition, an independent film is one which is made without the resources or backing of a Hollywood studio. However, in recent years, films that have been considered independent have ranged from the star-packed *Pulp Fiction* to the shaky *The Blair Witch Project*. Independent films are increasingly becoming more powerful in the film industry whether to become serious Oscar contenders or to rake in the box office bread.

Many independent filmmakers start out with only a love for movies and the desire to make one. But through the years, independent filmmaking has become increasing commercialized, due to events such as the Sundance Film Festival. What started as a small celebration of the independent spirit has now become one of the major events in the movie industry. Every year, studios around the world send scouting parties to Utah, hoping to find the next big hit. In fact, there is even a Sundance Film Channel available in addition to the Independent Film Channel.

The growth of interest generated by festivals cannot come close to what has happened since the explosion of the Inter-

net. There are now a variety of Websites which showcase independent short films, giving filmmakers and audiences alike the chance to view films online. Such sites as Ifilm.com and Atomfilms.com give filmmakers who use digital technology a forum for their wares.

The advent of digital cameras and the editing software available on computer systems has made it possible for anyone to direct their own film. The new iMac has given filmmakers the capability to edit together films with the greatest of ease. This technology offers an attractive alternative to filmmakers who are dismayed by the astronomical prices of film. Due to the low prices of digital cameras, some have predicted that digital cameras could, for the most part, replace film in future years.

Books remain one of the best resources available for people interested in filmmaking. Books about all aspects of filmmaking, from lighting and cinematography to screenwriting and producing are available. There are a few books that anyone serious about independent filmmaking should consider reading. The *American Cinematographer Manual* explains nearly everything one could ever want to know about cinematography and cameras.

One of the most informational and entertaining books on the market is Robert Rodriguez's *Rebel Without a Crew*, in which he discusses his experience making *El Mariachi*. Funny and easy to read, this book covers the whole film-making process, from story conception to the film's release by Columbia Pictures. Along the way, Rodriguez gives several nuggets of information which are well worth remembering.

"You really have to look at why you want

this. Is it for the fame and to see yourself on the cover of Entertainment Weekly or is it because of a passion, a desire to touch someone?" said Derik Wingo, writer, director and star of *The Waiters*.

Scott Barlow, writer and director of *The Last Late Night*, said lack of experience is not necessarily the end of the world for a film.

"I had never touched a 35 mm camera before this film and I had never worked with a cameraman," Barlow said. "I had a great director of photography, though, and I trusted him to set up the shots for me and then I would make any changes I might have."

His advice to people interested in making films:

"Find out what is in your heart and go for it. Go for your dreams and don't ever stop believing," Wingo said.

"There comes a time when you have to quit talking about making a movie and start doing it," Barlow said.

"Find people who are good at what they do and are fun to get along with. You need people who will support you in what you do and will pull you back when you have overstepped your boundaries. The best story in the world, the coolest shots—all of that stuff doesn't matter if you don't have an army of people around to help you," said Stu Pollard, writer and director of *Nice Guys Sleep Alone*.

Perhaps the best advice comes from the introduction to *Rebel Without a Crew* where Rodriguez writes, "First step to being a filmmaker is stop saying you want to be a filmmaker. I had been a filmmaker ever since the day I had closed my eyes and pictured myself making movies. So you don't want to be a filmmaker, you are a filmmaker. Go make yourself a business card."

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