

INTERNATIONAL GOLD AWARDS

Exclusive interview with multi award winning filmmaker James M. Storm



When did you decide you wanted to be a filmmaker?

It wasn't a decision I had to make. I was born with talent and a sense of purpose to fulfill my cinematic destiny. By six years old I had taken control of the family video camera and began teaching myself how to make movies. It was almost supernatural how fast I fell into the movie-making groove. By Middle school I was writing, directing, and acting in my own backyard medieval epics and stage plays. In high school I was self-producing spooky detective thrillers and post-apocalyptic anthologies. After high school I launched J.S. Co. PRODUCTIONS, my digital production studio, as a means to generate income and self produce my epic films. And the rest is history.

As a young self-taught filmmaker what kind of steps did you take to further your craft?

Learning from experience is obviously an important factor. In my youth I didn't have access to much official training (the internet then was not yet the learning resource it is today), so I got my hands on any and all film and entertainment related materials I could. Self-motivated, I was reading university level text books on film and studying film criticism before I even reached high school. As a child, I had to learn from experience but later on I had some fantastic education on the subject. Taking college level film classes in the evenings all four years of my high school career really prepared me to academically dive deeper into my stories.

You are known for your daring stunts in your films; from free climbing cliffs, to lighting yourself on fire, to being dragged behind a moving vehicle. What is your inspiration for pushing the boundaries of danger in your films?

As a young filmmaker I knew early on that in order to be noticed I had to do some really spectacular things to set myself apart. Naturally athletic, I found that incorporating stunts in my films was a great way to subvert the expectations of my audience. Over the years the stunts grew more and more daring in each film until it was an expected feature in my movies. I never faked it either. My stunts were very real. In a James Storm film the stunts will always have a calculated level of risk and the risk of entertainment is almost guaranteed.



Your recent cycle of films has garnered over one hundred and fifty awards and accolades in the last few years. Some of your film crew has been working with you for decades. What was their reaction to winning so many film awards?

Considering that just a few years ago none of us had a single award to our names, this came as a surprise and a little bit of a shock to them. Not for me. I know best of all how talented the people on my crew are and I knew we had pure cinematic magic on our hands. My crew has been loyal to me for decades and it has always been my goal for us all to rise together. When I started this latest film festival run it was my vow to make sure that everyone on my crew won awards and had their talent recognized because it's never been just about me.

What are some of the other benefits that you have experienced outside of winning film festivals and collecting trophies?

Outside of the awards and red carpets, my latest series of films have opened doors for me that I never even expected. For instance, in the last few years I have become an honored member of the Film Consortium San Diego, which is in my opinion the most important industry organization in all of San Diego.

What do you think sets your films apart from other indie films?

Some indie filmmakers think a film is something you throw together over the weekend. No matter what I produce I always try to deliver a film that is unique and unprecedented. I try to make films that would be difficult to replicate, if not impossible. My 2007 documentary thriller "BEYOND HUMAN the LAST CALL" is an excellent example. Sure with a big enough budget, "A" list actors and an incredible set on a soundstage a major studio might be able to mimic this film but it won't ever be able to recreate the intense raw energy of this film. My film feels real because it was real; it's as simple as that. It took me nearly 8 months to hand build the Magic Piano prop from my 2022 short film "CAPTAIN FANTASTIC and the MAGIC PIANO". Later it took me six years in all to build and shoot the vehicles and infrastructure of my 2023 documentary film "The ELECTRIC CYCLE RACING LEAGUE". Not many filmmakers can pull off the level of detail and dedication that I put into my films but I would like to see them try.

Can you address the rumors regarding your alleged "lost" art film, another cult classic, "The ADVENTURES IN ULTRA SUBURBIA"? And after nearly 2 decades will it ever see a public release date?

No, the rumors are not true and no the film is not lost. It does exist, however we have no plans whatsoever to release this film publicly at this time. This was our youth angst Rock n' Roll odyssey. We set out to make an outrageous film about drugs, sex and Rock n' Roll and the result was a film too crazy even for my catalogue. I'm sure some of us are trying hard to forget it even exists. The film garnered a small underground cult following in the early 2000's but never saw an official release. Occasionally we will have an anniversary screening of the film just for cast and crew but then it goes back into the vault. Some say we went too far in this film, others say we didn't go far enough, but it doesn't matter because you will never know.

When you say you have rejected the "Hollywood System" what do you mean by that?

It means that I've never been a fan of the traditional paths to Hollywood success. I prefer to make my own destiny and I'm certainly not serving coffee all day hoping for a big break. When I launched my production company I had a vision in mind of a place where all of my fellow artists had a safe place to create their art without worrying about judgment, creative theft, or predatory tactics. The crew and I are a tight entity, a perfectly synced machine of unbridled creative power with the goal of success on our minds.

What is the most difficult aspect of being an indie filmmaker?

Watching all of the normal people in the world have happy lives and careers without the eternal suffering of being an artist. Other than that, it's all hard if you are doing it right. If you are living your best life you aren't working hard enough. Indie filmmaking takes dedication, concentration, punishment, follow-through, and patience, the likes of which the civilian world will never understand. If you know, you know. The movie making hustle can be epically painful and not everyone can do it. As for me, thanks to my extraordinary filmmaking talent on loan from God, perhaps my greatest trick of all is that I make it all look so easy.

What is your next project?

My next project is a thriller titled "Where the Dragons Sleep" and it's a very personal project that I have been developing for years. It will have a lot to do with indie filmmaking, the Hollywood system, and what happens when control and regulation begins to destroy the fabric of the filmmaking world. It was originally slated for release this year however this project grows bigger by the day. There is a lot of world building involved and I'm really enjoying focusing on one project for a change. So, I might spend another year in development. We will see. To learn more about this project you can visit the website at wherethedragonssleep.com.

Do you think you will ever win an Oscar?

Maybe one day my work will be recognized, but hopefully not too soon. I have to save something for the final act.



If a major Hollywood studio decided to bank roll your next project would you take the money?

Other filmmakers might have a sense of desperation but not me. I've always been able to keep working and producing my films one way or another and I'm satisfied with that. Sure it would be nice to have a blank check to make a film but I've never needed it before to create great movies and money doesn't always produce great cinema. Should I ever be given the opportunity of a massive budget I'll consider it if it's on my terms. The "system" has never helped me so far and I'm not holding my breath that it will. If you want me Hollywood, you know where to find me.

It's the 15th anniversary of your cult classic film "BEYOND HUMAN the LAST CALL" what is your perspective on the controversial events then and have they changed? Also, how has it affected you as a filmmaker today?

Ironically "BEYOND HUMAN the LAST CALL" not only is our most notorious film it's still one of our most popular films to date. Nearing its 25th anniversary this film is still winning awards and is still very popular. Plagued by incredible misfortune, the production of this film was one of the most disastrous I've ever worked on. The cops busted us, the DA confiscated our equipment, we had to go to court, and it almost broke up my crew. Those were very painful times. On the other hand, the film has only grown in popularity and has become the ultimate haunted house film of our repertoire. Truly, I get more fan mail for this film than I get for all of my other films combined. It just struck a chord with people and for that I am very appreciative.

Final thoughts?

I just want to give a shout out to my friends back home in San Diego the legendary "San Diego Rat Pack" Jordan Jacobo, Randy Davison, Mark Atkinson and Prince Sergio Gadoy. Thanks fellas for letting me play with the cool kids.

