

BREAKING INTO HOLLYWOOD: A GUERRILLA FILM MAKERS POCKETBOOK



Want to work in
Hollywood? Buy
this book and
get on a plane!

BY

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THE HOLLYWOOD POCKETBOOK 10 COMMANDMENTS*

If Hollywood movies floateth thine boat, thou shalt geteth upon a plane right now

Thou shalt read Hollywood scripts every day until thou understandeth the true meaning of the word 'commercial'

Thou shalt master the art of the pitch

Thou shalt master the art of schmoozing the room

Thou shalt be extremely pleasant to assistants

Thou shalt develop multiple projects, nevereth putting all eggs in one basket

Thou shalt always return a call within 24hours

Thou shalt always check the traffic report before setting out anywhere

Thou shalt embrace and loveth most script notes, even if they are s**t, choosing ones battles with wisdom

Thou shalt obeyeth the law of Hollywood: Films are business, not art

Whetherest thou is a writer, actor or director, thou shalt think like a producer

*Yes we know it's eleven!

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To Chris Jones for his continuous support over many years and to Lucia for keeping him going!

To all my Hollywood friends for their continuous generosity in wanting to help new filmmakers find their feet here in Hollywood - yep, love you too.

Thanks to Judy Goldberg, Gail Hackston and Harriet Crate at the Living Spirit office too.

But most of all, from Team Guerilla Film, thank you...

THE FILM MAKERS...!

...for being so inspirational, for pushing the boundaries of possibility, imagination, and occasionally the law (!)

YOUR FILMS ROCK...!

...and we cannot tell you just how much we look forward to interviewing YOU about YOUR amazing success in the next book... **So remember, AIM HIGH!**

Stay in touch, join the Facebook page, join www.guerillafilm.com and let us know how you are getting on,
AND MAKE AMAZING MOVIES!

Love Team Guerilla Film x

BREAKING INTO HOLLYWOOD:

A GUERRILLA FILM MAKERS

POCKETBOOK

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

READ THIS FIRST!

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INTRODUCTION

Ten years ago I made the move to Hollywood.



I had been making movies in the UK, but after I made a film that received a British Independent Film Award nomination and still wasn't getting anywhere, I was hungry to try my chance in Hollywood. I was lucky. I was given the opportunity to be flown out to Los Angeles by MGM for consideration as the director on a werewolf film called '*Blood and Chocolate*'. I had made a small indie film *Urban Ghost Story* with my Living Spirit partner, Chris Jones and it had caught the eye of Hollywood producer Daniel Bobker.

Daniel, an ex publisher, had his hands on the teen book, *Blood and Chocolate* and had a written screenplay by Michael Landon and Ehren Kruger. Daniel was a fan of our little movie and was looking for a director. So flown over business class, put up in classy hotels on the beach, I was brought in for my meetings with the MGM executives. It was a great and yet very strange experience. It was my first encounter with Hollywood and I was incredibly naïve. I had no idea of what to expect and I had no Hollywood agent or manager to prepare me.

I had meeting after meeting with the MGM executives which all seemed to go well and eventually I walked into a huge boardroom

with all of the MGM execs I had previously met and the head of MGM sitting at the end of the table. It was right out of the movies. He had his feet up on the table, and he was leaning back in his plush leather chair smoking a cigar. The atmosphere was cold and the first words out of his mouth were *"Why would I give you my millions to make my movie?"* Then immediately followed, *"And what makes you think anybody would listen to you, a woman director?"*

Not exactly a lovely welcome, but that was presumably his M.O. He made it known that he wasn't exactly a fan but his executives (who interestingly were all women) were. Perhaps he wanted to see how I handled aggression? Perhaps he wanted to see how tough I was? Perhaps he didn't like the idea of a woman director?

Anyway, I stood my ground and told him that if none of the crew listened to me, then I didn't want them on my team. Just one rotten apple can spoil the bunch and that had to be nipped in the bud from the start. He smiled, heard my take and that was the end of the meeting.

I was then whisked into a room where they told me I had to meet another guy - Bob - no mention of who he was - just that he was 'Bob' and that he'd been around for years. So Bob enters - and Bob is a man in his late, late 70s and he starts to have a chat. I was incredibly confused by this character - Was this another test? Who was this man? He asked a lot of trivial questions but NOTHING about the movie - and then he left. I was told I could go. And that was that.

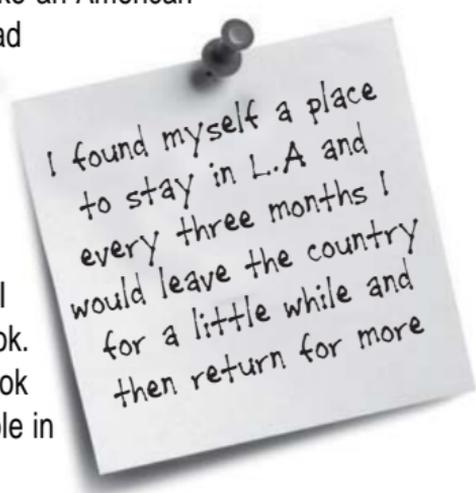
It was a very strange day. I flew back to London with no idea if I had got the job or not.

Back in England, all was quiet from the Studio. The producer told me he had no idea what was happening. He couldn't get an answer out of the executives and things weren't looking good. And so the film went away.

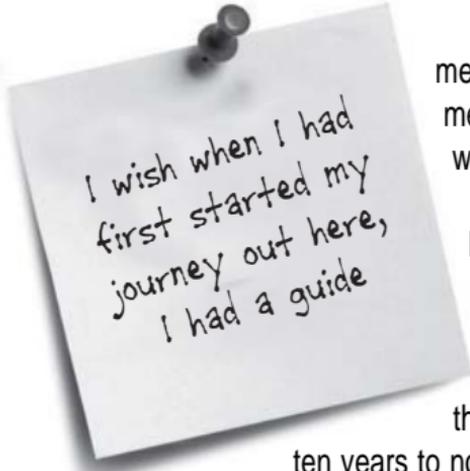
Although it was a downer that the movie wasn't happening, I felt incredibly positive from my dabble with Hollywood – so I decided to take the plunge.

I found myself a place to stay in L.A and every three months (due to the visa waiver program) I would leave the country for a little while and then return for more. Doing this for the following 2 years, was initially great fun but soon it became incredibly tiresome. I became sick of living out of a suitcase; so having already begun a book career with *The Guerilla Filmmaker Handbooks* with my Living Spirit partner in crime, I asked if our American/English publisher would like an American version of the exact book that we had produced for the UK market.

They said Yes! And they became my sponsor for an O1 visa. At last I didn't have to leave the country every three months, but technically I was only allowed to work on the book. However the great thing with the book was that it was interviews with people in the business, so I could continue



I found myself a place to stay in L.A and every three months I would leave the country for a little while and then return for more



I wish when I had
first started my
journey out here,
I had a guide

meeting people and taking meetings, in addition to sharing this with others via the book.

I spent the next few years learning the ropes of Hollywood on my feet. Networking, making friends and learning the lay of the land. It has taken me a good

ten years to now be entrenched in the business, to know what's what, who's who and to have built up those relationships.

I wish when I had first started my journey out here, I had a guide. Someone who could have shown me the ropes, told me what to avoid, what to pursue, and explained how the system worked. And I was even one of the lucky ones with an agent (see the section on agents to explain that one!).

I hope that this little pocketbook will help you on your journey and that it will better prepare you for the high school of Hollywood. Good luck to you and I hope to see you and your movies out here soon!

(btw, the movie *Blood and Chocolate* was finally produced six years later and I'm happy to say - with a woman director!)

Genx