

I sometimes wish this column wasn't just about screenwriting. Sometimes I go through the morning news and wish I could just fucking rant about all of the stupid shit that floods the Internet.

I mean who the fuck cares if Shia banged Megan Fox while making Transformers? Good for him. I mean I don't think it's cool to take advantage of the mentally challenged but hey, at least she's hot, right? So what if she drools and can't do simple math... To each their own, but it's not newsworthy.

I'd love to write about how much I would love to kick Lady Gaga in the dick for dressing up like a panda to go on a Japanese talk show.

But no... You guys don't want to hear that shit. You want to talk about the Biz and fucking screenwriting. So let's talk about it.

This week we're going to talk about periods.

Now, I'm not sure why I've been getting so many emails about periods when I'm not a woman, but after doing some research on WebMD, I quickly came up with some answers.

You see, women have cycles...

What?

Oh.

Not that kind of period?

Oh! Period *pieces!*

Shit.

So I was just informed that I may have misinterpreted a few recent emails from readers. Hmm... I now know WAY too much information about, well, let's just move on... On the brighter side of things, I'm much more equipped to answer questions about period *pieces*.

So I've recently gotten a lot of emails about period *pieces* asking why they are such a hard sell. Here's the basic answer...

They're expensive.

Really expensive.

Think about it, even on a low budget, a period film has to fit the time frame. You can't have a movie set in the 1950's and have a DeLorean in the frame... Oh wait.

Hmmm...

Okay but all that 1950's shit...that's expensive to get. Most of the time, the costumes, the props all have to be made. There's no magical place that period clothing and props exist.

The cars have to be found. The signage has to be right. The design of the houses. All of it has to be recreated and that cost money.

Now, I have been a VERY staunch advocate to NOT think about budget when writing. I've always taken the stand that you should just write your fucking movie and leave the money to the people upstairs.

But...

You do have to know what you're getting into when you decide to write a period film. The bottom-line is that you're already swimming upstream and you haven't even typed FADE IN yet.

"But Manny, period films get made all the time!"

Yes. Good for fucking you. I know how to use google too, so let's take a look at the last 5 period films that have been released.

Super 8... Set in 1979. Produced by Spielberg and written and Directed by J.J. Abrams. I would think that you wouldn't need this spelled out for you, but just in case you do... Ahem... You're not J.J. Abrams.

X-Men: First Class... Set in the 60's during the Cuban missile crisis. Based on a well established comic book series and written by Ashley Miller and Zack Stentz who worked on Thor and Agent Cody Banks. Not first time writers.

Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides... Set in... Look, we don't really have to do this one do we? Depp, Bruckheimer, fucking Disney... Nevermind that Terry Rossio and Ted Elliot (the screenwriters) have a list of credits that match the length of Liam Neeson's cock. (FYI... That means the list is REALLY long.)

The Tree of Life... Set in the 1950's... Written and Directed by Terrance Malick... Obviously not a first timer and has enough street cred to do whatever the fuck he wants.

Water for Elephants... Set in the 20's during the depression. Based on a VERY popular book and the script was written by Richard LaGravenese who has quite a library of credits. Again, not a first time writer.

So are you getting the point? These films are not being made by rag tag fucktards who are floating around Hollywood with their 120 pages of schlock.

I'll share with you a very funny memory. In the first season of Project Greenlight (google it and rent it...you'll learn a lot) the winner of the competition had a movie set in 1978 in Chicago. He was having an important meeting with Chris Moore and Jon Gordon, the producers of the flick, about the script and making it work in the budget that was allotted. The two issues that were causing this script to get held up was 1978 and Chicago (not a cheap town at the time to shoot in.)

The fucktard gets up and goes to the bathroom in the middle of the meeting. While gone, the subject of 1978 comes up and Jon basically nixes it. It was a coming of age flick and it could easily be adapted to a contemporary time and still hold it's meaning. Chris agreed.

The fucktard returns and throws a fit that the story was his personal journey and it meant so much to him and growing up in Chicago in the 70's is what it's all about and he will fight them to the end to keep it in 1978 and Chicago.

My point of this story? I would hope you'd get it, but if not...

**FUCK YOUR PERSONAL JOURNEY!!**

I was born in 1978. I was a child of the 80's. I played video games instead of going outside. I listened to music that my parents didn't understand. We were at war in Afghanistan. Transformers had a movie coming out. There were these groovy devices that allowed you to listen to music while you walked! AND people thought Muammar Gaddafi was fucking bat shit crazy.

You know... as opposed to now.

See what I'm getting at?

Now, I know it may seem like I'm shitting on all your would be periods... And your scripts (zing!) but I'm not... I'm in the same boat with all of you. The first real script that I started to send around town took place in WWII Germany. Everyone loved the script, but they all passed because of the time period. Unfortunately it's a script about an American force going behind enemy lines on the eve of Normandy to stop Hitler's obsession with super soldiers, so it's kind of hard to jazz that up for 2011.

But I wrote it any way because I loved the idea. I was impassioned with writing it and had fun doing so. That came through in the writing and man did I write the fuck out of it. And what's wrong with people loving it? Means they want to read the next one I write, (which is contemporary) and who knows... Once I get that Liam Neeson cock sized list

of credits, I'll be able to see that WWII script get made. Cause it's awesome. Just can't do anything with it right now.

So yes, period pieces can be great... But they aren't going to get made by you. Not yet. You don't have to give up on it, but you can't rely on it either. Get it in people's hands and hope they like your writing good enough to want to read the next one.

End of rant.

On another note, one of my long time readers called me on some shit. She wrote in and asked:

"you know, you always talk about what not to do and all of the shitty scripts you get... But has there ever been a script worthy of moving up the chain?"

The answer is simple: nope.

A couple that I thought that I might pass on... But they didn't. There was a script once that I really loved. Thought it was genius. It was a post-apocalyptic Lord of the Flies. I THOUGHT it was really well written. So I passed it up through the ranks.

Dude hated it. Thought it was shitty writing (which I didn't understand) AND there was already a project like that getting green lit at another studio. So it was pointless to try and get this one made.

So it got shelved.

'dems the breaks. Welcome to Hollywood.

Till next week...