

## **Smoke**

*Directed by: Roberto Serrini*

*Written by: Roberto Serrini & Krissy Kimmel*

*Edited by: Roberto Serrini & Michelle Vergara*

"Girl on girl action. That's what's gonna win this contest. That what Hollywood is looking for."

Roberto Serrini was riveted about two things: the possibility of winning ten grand and having his ex-girlfriend make out with another girl.

"This was all very exciting for me. I don't think I slept for a week straight. Michelle had brought the contest to our attention and in the true spirit of Proletariat (do it cheap and fast and lets turn a buck) we dove in head first."

Smoke was the entry into the NYC Midnight Movie Making Madness that allowed the team the opportunity to compete for the hefty 10,000.00 prize in New York. They were competing for one of twenty four spots against over a thousand other teams. The team was given the genre "Samurai film" and the subject of "rescuing a kidnapped victim" to create a script around.

"We needed something different, something with a hook. What we needed was to pull a Crying Game on those punks in NY. But a *new* Crying Game.

We met down at the Griddle Cafe on Sunset and fought off the pack of Egg Benedict-eating-Von-Dutch-wearing-metrosexuals for a booth. We ordered a jug of their atomic coffee and *that's* when the ideas started to come. I remember a lot of ideas about midgets, Frederick Douglas and one idea we entitled "Jesus 2000: The Final Judgment", but none seemed to hit home. Until Krissy Kimmel came up with *Smoke*.

We started production right after we scripted and boarded the idea. The costume for the protagonist was really important. I wanted to give it a real urban, realistic feel, something that wasn't over the top but still menacing as hell. It's always better to go simple than extravagant, and in this instance it worked brilliantly. I think it's Juan's hat that really pulls the ensemble together; its just enough Sergio Leone and John Carpenter mixed together.

### **I call it the Sergio Carpenter.**

We did all the stunts ourselves because who the hell else would trust us with their limbs. I mean, halve of us don't even have insurance through our day jobs and somehow SAG wasn't being too helpful despite the fact that we told them it was a "*really* experimental film". Hmmm. We did bring in a "stunt coordinator" for the opening sequence, who was really a bouncer that Michelle worked with down at the Highlands that knew "martial arts". I recall the day going something like this:

"So, what are you guys looking to do?"

"Well, you know, a few punches, maybe an elbow, and then have him end up on the ground. Whatever you think works. You're the professional after all."

"Ok, well lets start with a slap-"

At which this point Mr. Roidsrage full out slaps Dave Hanson flat in the face.

"Hey!"

"You're suppose to block it."

"Oh, sorr-" another bitch slap, this one so hard it echoed. "OOUW! What's the big idea?!"

"Block it. I told you."

Slap. Again.

And so on and so forth. Needless to say, on the request of Dave, we did not call this guy back for the rest of the fight scenes which were simple and turned out good. We didn't go overboard (sorta . . . if doing a line of coke off a Samurai sword isn't considered overboard), and we kept the story short and simple, even cliché at times. Overall I think most of this film was made in the editing room (should read: on my Viao in my bedroom). I cut it quick and fluid with the help of Michelle who's "get rid of that. It suck" line helped us find just the cream of the film. It turned out really sweet. People are hooked during the opening credit sequence.

Then again, modern Samurai films are pretty hot (Even though Kill Bill should have been one film), but the use of girl on girl action, *well*, that spices up any genre. I'm sure Kurosawa's directors cut has a little kabuki action in it, if you know what I mean. And if you do, tell me how I can get a hold of such said film. You will be rewarded. *Handsomely.*"

- Roberto Serrini