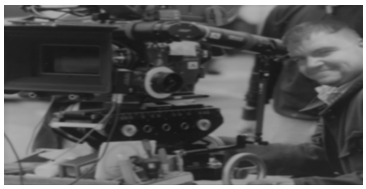
INTERVIEWS

By: The Professor

Interview with Alan Russo



Welcome one and all to this issue's interview. I need to put out a public notice, before we get started today, and that is this will be my final interview for this magazine. I have landed a full-time spot elsewhere and will be starting that gig sometime some. I enjoyed the talks I've had with the people I have interviewed and the response I've received. Thank you to everyone! This month's guest has pretty much done it all in his thirty-two years of life, from being an independent filmmaker to becoming the co-owner of his new publishing brand called: Zombie Works. He is an author, director, editor, and publisher—of course I can be talking about the one and only L. Alan Russo Jr!

Welcome to the interview booth, Mr. Russo.

Alan Russo: Just call me Alan. Thank you, Professor, for having me.

Professor: Okay, Alan, I understand that you have been making movies for several years. So what caused you to decide to leave movies and go into a completely different career?

Alan Russo: The business is different now days in Indy Films as to when I first started in the mid-nineties. Back then you could make a film for a few grand, it could be choppy as hell and you could tell it was shot with an old video camera, but back then it didn't matter. It was considered art, and viewed as such by the audience. But in today's world, that's not the case. In today's world, art is long dead. It's *all* about the bottom line, and today's moviegoer is more interested in watching how a hundred million dollar CGI film plays out. There's currently no room for *real* Indy filmmakers. Today, expect a four million dollar price tag…that for an Indy film! I've never been about the dollars and cents, I just wanted to express what I had to say—back then, it was through film, today it's through books.

Professor:I know you came here wanting to plug your company's first anthology, and I promise we will get into that. But I just want to cover all the areas first.

Alan Russo: That's cool, Professor, what's your next question?

Professor: On your Facebook page, there was a blog about the last film you worked on. You said, and I quote, "Once we go to the location and started filming things were different from when I did 'Body Bag'. No one was happy; it was in August so everyone was hot and angry, and it was just a drag to do." My question is why was it *so* different from making Body Bag to filming Typhoeus?

Alan Russo: It was the people who made thing such a pain in the ass. With Body Bag, it was me, my producer and a bunch of my friends I knew since High School. When I wrote the script with Dave [Montoya], we didn't once talk about the bottom line, or what the over head was going to be. We sat down and wrote a f**king awesome story. Dave and another producer footed the bill for Body Bag, and again, it wasn't I want my money back in eight months, it was more like—okay we got the cash, let go have fun and make a movie.

But with Typhoeus, it was totally the opposite. I had investors breathing down my neck, wanting to know when was the film going to be finished, so they could get their investment monies as well as

some profit back. At one point, I had Angel Bruckheimer calling me *everyday* wanting to know the progress of the film. With that and issues with the actors and other problems I was having, I said, “Screw it,” and walked away from it. I was done.

Professor:I’m glad you brought up Mr. Bruckheimer. I read somewhere online, as I was taking note to do this interview, that you sold New Blood Films to him. But at the same time, I know that MythWurks says they own the rights. Can you clear up some of the confusion?

Alan Russo: Let’s see how do I explain this…All right, in the end game, I owned The New Blood Film Company, before it was incorporated it was New Blood Films and before that it was two merged companies, Russo Films and Southren Lights Distribution. Following me so far?

Professor: Yeah.

Alan Russo: Okay good, then as we were working on Typhoeus, I decided that I didn’t want it to be a New Blood Films Production, because The New Blood Films Company was presenting the flick. So I reopened Russo Films as a production company and put under the TNBFC umbrella. When I was looking for financers, the first person I went to was my longtime friend Dave Montoya. Now I know he’s not going to be happy about me spilling the beans, but Dave has been a silent partner since 2001. And in 2009, when I first hit him up about it, he had no problem investing. It was the same amount he invested, when I was doing Body Bag. But, in 2009/2010 the film had a much higher price tag about three or four times the amount he invested. So, I was introduced to Bruckheimer and Fred Matheson who covered the rest of the cost to make the film.

When things hit the fan, and I closed up shop and knew the only way to get these guys to stop breathing down my neck was to barter with them. Since Bruckheimer bought out Matheson’s part, Angel had the biggest stake in things. And, I needed to make things right with Dave first. When I gave back Dark Myth Production Studios to him, I explained that things had turned for the worst with TNBFC and said I couldn’t give him his cash back, but instead I offered him New Blood Films (the production studios, not the entire company), which he accepted instead of cash. That same week, I pulled Russo films from The New Blood Films Company’s list of subsidiaries—it no longer had ties with the company. And finally, I gave Angel The New Blood Films Company and it’s one remaining subsidiary, Southren Lights Distribution. Make sense?

Professor: Actually, yeah, and a smart move on your behalf to save the company you started in Russo Films.

Alan Russo: Thank you.

Professor: Now all of this was going on before or after you bought Dark Myth Production Studios?

Alan Russo: It was right after we made the transaction. I don’t say we bought it, because technically, we never did. The New Blood Films Company put a down payment on it, but we never paid the bill. That was an extremely big mess, in which I was made out to be the bad guy. All I wanted to do was help my friend, who was having a tough time in life, you know? I’ve known Dave [Montoya] since March, 2000—that’s almost thirteen years. I knew he was not mentally or physically up to running a business, and despite what people have said or are still saying, if I didn’t buy the company Dave was going to close up shop and go out of business. In a weird way, I kept this company from ending, and yes, I admit I made some bad decisions—my heart was in keeping my best friend’s dream alive while he got his game back (which is what eventually happened).

Professor: So Alan, we jump a head a few months after everything ended and you moved to Arkansas from Florida, right?

Alan Russo: Yeah, in 2011, I moved back to Arkansas. I wanted to leave everything that happened in Fort Walton Beach there and start over here. While it could have been my most shining moment, it

wasn't, it was just the opposite. It was nice; I got sh*t back on track.

Professor: And from there, at what point did you decide to go into the world of publishing?

Alan Russo: Shortly after I got here. I watched as Dark Myth Production Studios put out the products I had been working on while I was there, and was saddened because they didn't look like what I had originally imagined. So I was like: "What if I could do that on my own?" But not with a board of directors or managers of different divisions wanting to have their input into the products as well. I wanted to be the sole creative director of a company, and make sh*t I see clearly in my head. I knew I did not *ever* want to deal with any more investors, so I saved up for over a year to have the cash to start Zombie Works and put out our first book.

Professor: Which was your "Monsterthology", correct?

Alan Russo: Yes. I was able to bring together fifteen of the best independent writers in the mircopub world and contain all of their respective talents in the Monsterthology book. It was crazy how fast that book came together; it was awesome, and had the same image as my films—it was Indy as f**k! That's what I was shooting for, you know? That sort of independent art style you saw in pre-2005 Indy flicks, the raw stone cold talent which hadn't been obscured from the outside mainstream. You can pick up a copy from Amazon for like $12.95 and a Kindle version for $9.95.

Professor: You have any Links you'd like to share for your book?

Alan Russo: Yeah… If you want to pick up a paperback copy go to http://www.amazon.com/Monsterthology-Volume-Alan-Russo-Jr/dp/1478241373 or for the Kindle copy head over to http://www.amazon.com/Monsterthology-ebook/dp/B008MPHMBK and I should also mention that if you are an Amazon Prime Member, you can download the eBook version for absolutely *FREE*!

If you are even a bit remotely interested in what I and Zombie Works are working on you can go to our company website at http://zombieworks.us/ or check us out on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/zombieworkspublications

Professor: So what's next for you, Alan?

Alan Russo: For *me*, I'm personally writing a memoir about my life within New Blood Films called, "The Rise and Fall of New Blood Films." For me as in Zombie Works, we are going to issue an open call for contributors next month, for our next anthology, "You can't kill me, I'm already dead." This is to be a spine tingling anthology that is for all the 'vampire' lovers of the world. It is planned to have thirteen blood-sucking tales. 'You can't kill me, I'm already dead' will, hopefully, settle either Classic or Modern Vampire fan's lust for the undead.

Professor: Would you have some words of wisdom or encouragement for any fledgling writers out there who may be considering writing as a career?

Alan Russo: Yeah man, just do it. You want it? Well it's there for the taking!

Professor: Is there anything we didn't cover that you would like to share with our readers?

Alan Russo: Truthfully? Na man, I just gave everything I had for this interview. It was really fun and thank you for letting me speak candidly.

Professor: Thank you for giving such an A+ interview, that was fantastic! All right, ladies and gents, this is the Professor for the last time signing out!