



EFILMCRITIC.COM

More film festival coverage than any other Australian website!

Today on UGO: UGO Music Challenge 2.0, Halo 2 Multiplayer Map Pack Video Gallery.

JCPenney

summer is
grilling out

FREE SHIPPING
WHEN YOU SPEND \$25

shop summer essentials

[[Home](#) | [Reviews](#) | [Editorials](#) | [Release Dates](#) | [DVD Releases](#) | [Top 20's](#) | [Criticwatch](#) | [Coming Soon](#) | [Search](#) | [Be A Critic](#) | [Public Forums](#) | [New](#) | [Festival Coverage](#) | [Contests](#) | [Store](#) | [Mailbag](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Credits](#) | [HBS Network](#)]

Film Production

Launch Your Film Career Small Classes, New Facilities

Movie Reviews

Read movie reviews, find theatres & showtimes. Buy tickets online!

Film School at Full Sail

Degrees and career training in Professional Film, Video production

Archival Film Research

archival film research documentary

Ads by Goooooogle

CineVegas '05 Interview ('Self-Medicating' Director Monty Lapica)

by Erik Childress

The "Self-Medicating" Pitch: *Self Medicating* is a coming of age story about a 17-year-old young man, Andrew Eriksen, whose father has recently passed away. Andrew is so devastated and emotionally ill-equipped to deal with the loss that his life begins to spiral out of control - getting arrested, failing in school, abusing drugs, and a downright horrible relationship with his mother. As a last resort, his mother hires a private company to kidnap Andrew and send him to a locked-down and corrupt adolescent hospital where he clashes with the head of institution and ultimately must face his demons head on.



Your film is about drug addiction. Many would argue that Darren Aronofsky's Requiem for a Dream is the champion of this genre. Was it an influence on you at all? What other films about substance addiction do you believe succeed and tell us which ones have failed that you have seen?

MONTY: I absolutely agree! Requiem is king. I can't think of another movie that depicts addiction in such a raw and visceral form. Although I love the movie, it was not a huge influence on *Self Medicating* because the sheer ugliness of addiction, while a prominent theme in my film, is not as much the central focus as it is in Requiem, but more so, the reason for the addiction, the underlying cause. As for other films dealing with addiction, I think Scarface speaks a lot about the euphoric highs and, inevitably, the desperate lows that come with drug abuse. Less than Zero is another that comes to mind. And of course, Goodfellas. Sharon Stone's character in Casino.

What can you tell us about the "true story" that your film is based on?

MONTY: When I was 17 my mom sent me to a program similar to the one depicted in the film. I was absolutely livid and in utter disbelief at the complete lack of rights minors have and vowed that I would one day make a movie about the place to hopefully expose these corrupt institutions to the world. But even before

LATEST FEATURES IN THE *CineVegas Festival 2005* SERIES

[CineVegas '05 Interview \('As We Knew It' Director Lynn Zook\)](#)

[CineVegas '05 Interview \('Firefly' Director Pete Marcy\)](#)

[CineVegas '05 Interview \('Trona' Director David Fenster\)](#)

[CineVegas '05 Interview \('Me & You & Everyone We Know' Director Miranda July\)](#)

[CineVegas '05 Interview \('Radiant' Director Steve Mahone\)](#)

[MORE](#)

LATEST FEATURES

[SOINC DEATH MONKEY SOUNDTRACK REVIEWS - Danny Elfman](#)

[Book Review - It Don't Worry Me - Nashville, Jaws and Beyond by Ryan Gilbey](#)

[Book Review - The Virgin Guide to Horror Films by James Marriott](#)

[The Sunday News Recap \(Monday Edition\)! 7.4.05](#)

[Alphabetized Movie Thoughts](#)

[Forgotten Video: Forgotten Summers](#)

[DVD Reviews for 7/1: Kinda Fonda Fonda](#)

[The DVD Shopping Planner \(July](#)

I could, the government investigated and shut down the institution I was sent to a few years after I escaped. But there are others just like it that continue to operate in the U.S. today.

When you were 14 years old, if someone asked you what you wanted to be when you grew up, what would your answer have been?

MONTY: Baseball player. 100%. Followed very closely by FBI agent. Jet-ski racer, anyone? I certainly was not running around with a super 8 camera at age 4 like, it seems, so many others were (or say).

How did you get started in filmmaking?

MONTY: When I was about 18, and somewhat disillusioned about the future, I found myself pondering if there even was anything that I could conceivably be happy doing as a career and, quite possibly, for the rest of my life. The only thing that came to mind was making movies, so I went for it.

How did your film started? How did you go from script to finished product?

MONTY: I knew the only way I would ever get to make the movie that I wanted to make was if I raised the money independently and did it myself. I wrote the script with a realistic budget in mind and my producing partner and I raised the money through private investors in Las Vegas. It's not easy convincing somebody to put up money for a first-time director, but it was either I make it happen or go back to the job I had in college - serving up fried chicken and ribs at a dinner theater in Buena Park, which, quite frankly, was not an option. When I think about it now, it's still amazing to me that we somehow pulled it off.



When you were in pre-production, did you find yourself watching other great movies in preparation?

MONTY: Yes, and voraciously. There's no better way of getting psyched up and inspired before the shoot. The movies I love, the movies that inspire me, I have seen literally hundreds of times each and could shot list them out in their entirety just in my head.

Name the three directors working today that you most admire.

MONTY: Michael Mann, Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, and Jonathan Glazer. Writers I love: Andrew Niccol, Eric Roth, Kenneth Lonergan.

How have things changed for you since your film started playing on the festival circuit? If this is your first acceptance into a film festival, describe what that's like and your thoughts about CineVegas. What are you looking forward to most during your CineVegas experience?

MONTY: This is the first one. I was born and raised in Las Vegas and, as an avid fan of independent films of all sorts, I've attended CineVegas each year and have watched it grow into one of the most exciting film festivals in the nation. To have my first feature premiering here at CineVegas, in my hometown, in front of all my friends and family, is like a dream come true.

When you were shooting the film, did you have CineVegas (or any other film festivals in general) in mind?

MONTY: Yes, CineVegas was definitely the goal. Anything else is kind of frosting on top of the cake. Each year I attended the festival, always in my mind - one day... one day...

Have you been turned down by other festivals? If so, which ones and what do you think could be improved with festivals in general.

[2005\)](#)

[SONIC DEATH MONKEY SOUNDTRACK REVIEWS - 2046](#)

[SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL DIARY PART III and IV](#)

[CineVegas '05 Interview \('As We Knew It' Director Lynn Zook\)](#)

[CineVegas '05 Interview \('Firefly' Director Pete Marcy\)](#)

[The Sunday News Recap! 6.26.05](#)

[Morgan York, Actress: Profile Interview Series Vol. #11](#)

[Meet the REAL Shark Boy: An Interview With Dean Roll](#)

[CineVegas '05 Interview \('Trona' Director David Fenster\)](#)

[DVD Reviews for 6/24: No Jacket \(or much else\) Required](#)

[CineVegas '05 Interview \('Me & You & Everyone We Know' Director Miranda July\)](#)

[Interview: Elizabeth Banks and Chris Terrio- Reaching for new career "Heights"](#)

[Book Review - Alfred Hitchcock: A Lifetime in Darkness and Light by Patrick McGilligan](#)

Ads by Google

[Film Festival](#)
[Documentary](#)
[Arthouse Films](#)
[Indy Films](#)
[Script Supervisor](#)

LATEST REVIEWS

[Welcome Danger](#) Portrait of a film industry in transition.

[Girl Shy](#) One of the first great romantic comedies.

And Martin Lawrence's streak continues: Nothing but crap, 10 years running!

[Rebound](#) Coming out, with egg roll.

[Saving Face](#) Hum Aapke Hain Bewafaa Dhadkan'

[Bewafaa](#) Marriage Counselling...The Fun Way!

[Mr. and Mrs. Smith](#)

MONTY: Not yet. But with the number of quality independent films being made today by so many creative filmmakers there are just not enough spots in the festival line-ups for all of them and, of course, some good ones are bound to be left out. I'm certainly aware that it's something that we might face as we continue along the festival circuit.

The festival circuit: what could be improved? What's been your favorite part of the ride?

MONTY: The phone call informing me that Self Medicated had been accepted into CineVegas.

Have you seen any independent films recently on the festival circuit, in theaters or on video that influenced you? Or anything that you would just like to give a shout-out to that audiences should be seeing (or given a chance to see?)

MONTY: Yes! **The Assassination of Richard Nixon**. Emmanuel Lubezki's photography is just so damn stylish. But always serving the story first. A very well made film all around.

What's the one glaring lesson you learned while making this film?

MONTY: No matter how prepared you think you are, you're only as prepared as your 1st A.D. Hire the best you can possibly find.

If a studio said 'we love this, we love you, you can remake anything in our back catalogue for \$40m' – what film, if any, would you want to remake?

MONTY: **Mac and Me**. Except instead of the creature needing Coca-Cola and McDonald's to survive I'd change it to Pepsi and Burger King and really cash out! I don't know, I think the whole remake craze currently going on in Hollywood is self-defeating. If they really want to remake all these great Korean films, like **Oldboy** and **Infernal Affairs**, why not save the futile efforts and just show the films. They're already done!



Two parter – name an actor you'd KILL to work with, and then name an actor in your own film that you really think is destined for great things.

MONTY: Ben Kingsley. He can play anybody, from Ghandi to Don Logan in **Sexy Beast**, and he's so good the audience will always believe him. As for the actors in **Self Medicated**, I think Kristina Anapau, the very talented young actress who plays Nicole is someone audiences will see a lot more of in the near future. Right now, she's like an under-the-radar Natalie Portman.

At what point will you be able to say, "Yes! I've made it!"

MONTY: That day already came when my former principal, the same one who expelled me my senior year, was escorting me and my DP through the halls of my old high school asking us which classroom we wanted to shoot in for the high school scene. "How about this one? It's got a great science lab. Or maybe this one, look at those aquariums. Wouldn't those look great!"

A film is made by many people, including the director (of course), but you'll often see movies that open with a credit that says "a film by..." – Did you use that credit in your film? If so, defend yourself! If not, what do you think of those who do?

MONTY: No, even though I also wrote the script, I chose not to use a "film by" credit on the film. I have nothing against the practice or those who do but I personally wouldn't have felt comfortable using one now, especially considering this is my first film.

[War of the Worlds](#) Turn off brain. Open ears. Enjoy.

[Safety Last!](#) That shot of the man on the clock tower - comes from here.

[Cinderella Man](#) A scrappy contender for everyone's ten-best lists

[War of the Worlds](#) Another slice of Spielbergian genius.

[Five Children and It](#) If only more kiddie fare could be this wonderful.

[Strange Bedfellows \(2004\)](#) A cute, endearing piece of fluff.

[Speedy](#) Lloyd's terrific last silent

[Freshman The \(1925\)](#) Well, shake my hand and call me Speedy!

[War of the Worlds](#) As unsettling as it is exhilarating!

[Dead Birds](#) Derivative plot + creepy atmospherics = almost worth a view.

[Hulk](#) A comic-book adaptation with art-film pretensions. Sadly, a misfire.

[Après vous...](#) Do you ever wish you'd just left someone hanging?

[Business of Strangers The](#) Claustrophobic character study at its best.

[War of the Worlds](#) Tom Cruise is the least of this movie's problems