

A MATT NAGIN FILM

INSIDE JOB

DIRECTOR Q&A

Who are some of your cinematic influences?

I'm influenced by a number of directors, writers, even a few curmudgeonly German philosophers. Perhaps my principal influence is Stanley Kubrick. While I admire countless elements in his films—I think the aspect most influential upon "Inside Job" is the controlled use of dark comedy and satire that has an absurdist streak. Other filmmakers who are influential are Howard Hawks, Elia Kazan, Woody Allen, and David Mamet (Wow! That's a heavy list for a film with a central motif of a rubber chicken!).

How did you develop the concept?

I'm a standup comedian, and, in addition to my regular material, I used to do a character, Henry Gargonzo. He was a filthy vagrant with a long beard, a southern accent, and a propensity for wild drug and sex binges. This character helped me develop the persona of one of the leads, Mr. G., and, after numerous drafts, I created various other characters and a complex, stylized story that I hoped wouldn't get me put before the firing squad.

What themes are you trying to convey with this film?

Many themes run through the film concurrently. For example, there is a satirical exploration of the type of depravity that can often go hand-in-hand with power. The boss, Mr. G., is a maniacal, Borat-type character, which was necessary in order to generate the kind of skewering of office politics we were seeking (and also gave me a chance to snort a huge bag of flour and make it seem like cocaine). As wild as Mr. G.'s antics may seem they are not really that much more over-the-top than was demonstrated by Denis Kozlowski, the former C.E.O. of Tyco, or Jordan Belfort, former C.E.O. of Stratton Oakmont.

This film seems to have a psychoanalytic element. For example, Josh sucks his thumb when nervous. Why?

I wanted Josh to be an oedipally-regressed type character (sucking thumb, drinking apple juice) whom nonetheless presents a kind of oedipal challenge to the father figure, Mr. G. Connie, meanwhile, has a maternal role in this office-family, nurturing and assuaging Josh, and keeping him complacent to the rule of the father.

Why did you create a film that mixes genres?

A film that mixes genres is more likely to get audiences scratching their heads and going "huh?," which I always thought was dope.

What compelled you to make Inside Job?

I wanted to explore how power corrupts. The film does this, crazily enough, through a rubber chicken. By the end of the film this rubber chicken is suggestive of the way all of us—in our daily lives—are, in certain ways, being manipulated like toys.

Do you have plans for future projects?

Yes. I'm working on a feature-length comedy script right now I intend to direct. It's another dark comedy—only about a Marine who gets badly injured in the War in Afghanistan. Normally such a film would be a drama, but, as far as I'm concerned, such a dark subject matter offers terrific comedic potential. I can't say more about the feature, at this juncture, other than that if you're loaded—and you want to donate money to the film—I can make you an Associate Producer—or some other fancy title—and write you a highly-literary thank you letter in any font you desire.

