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Q&A: Norman Jewison

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Few directors have explored the full range of filmmaking like this year's DGA motion picture direction Lifetime Achievement Award honoree Norman Jewison. From light comedy (1964's "Send Me No Flowers") to dark drama (1984's "A Soldier's Story") to musicals (1971's "Fiddler on the Roof"), the Canadian native has done it all -- though that doesn't mean, as he told The Hollywood Reporter's Todd Longwell, he's quite done yet.

The Hollywood Reporter: You know the old cliché about lifetime achievement awards. Is this scary for you?

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Norman Jewison: (Laughs.) The only scary thing about it is maybe a few people are thinking you're ready to fall off the perch. Otherwise, because it's coming from the DGA, it's really a very treasured honor.

THR: Is there a film that stands out as your most enjoyable experience?

Jewison: Maybe "The Cincinnati Kid" (1965). It was the first dramatic film I had the opportunity to make after being under contract to Universal and making only comedies. It not only helped my career, it saved me, in a way, from being pigeonholed and confined to a studio system.

THR: You titled your autobiography "This Terrible Business Has Been Good to Me." Do you feel that?

Jewison: I grew up in an era where the studios were separate entities, run by very strong individuals who made up their minds about whether they wanted to make a picture in 15 minutes. Now you're dealing with a multinational corporation and the studio is probably just part of their leisure-time division. I'm amazed that so many good films are getting made.

THR: You're 83. What are your ambitions?

Jewison: (Laughs.) I have a screenplay called "High Alert." It's kind of a political satire based on a film I made called "The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming" (1966). I'm going to hopefully shoot it in Nova Scotia this summer. I think it can be a sleeper.

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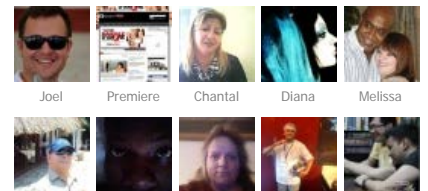
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