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JIM GIANOPULOS



Introduction by Despina Mouzaki, TIFF's director, and Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos, film critic and discussion's moderator.

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

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Επειδή υπάρχει ένα reel της Fox και επειδή το κοινό μας είναι μικτό, θα πρότεινα να ξεκινήσουμε με αυτό. Να δούμε κατά κάποιο τρόπο τα επιτεύγματα του στούντιο κατά τη δική σας προεδρία και μετά να ξεκινήσουμε με ερωτήσεις ή με κάτι που θα θέλατε εσείς, κατευθείαν με ερωτήσεις από τον κόσμο.

Να ξεκινήσω λέγοντας πόσο εξαιρετικά σπάνιο είναι να έχουμε έναν διευθυντή στούντιο που μιλάει και ελληνικά. Είχα συναντήσει τον κύριο Gianopulo πριν από μερικά χρόνια στο πάρτι που ακολούθησε την επίσημη πρεμιέρα του "Master and Commander" στην Αγγλία. Κάναμε μια σύντομη συζήτηση και μου είπε πόσο περήφανος ήταν για αυτό το πρότζεκτ -κατάλαβα ότι είναι κάτι που ο ίδιος το προσπάθησε πάρα πολύ, πολύ προσωπικά. Χάρηκε που βγήκε αυτή η ταινία, ανεξάρτητα από το αν θα έκανε τεράστια επιτυχία ή απλώς επιτυχία. Θέλω λοιπόν να ρωτήσω: ποιο είναι το αγαπημένο σας φιλμ από τα αποσπάσματα που είδαμε και αν μερικά από τα αγαπημένα σας σχέδια είναι εξαιρετικά δύσκολο να υλοποιηθούν - δίνεται πραγματικά μάχη για να γίνουν;

Jim Gianopulos

Το να ρωτήσει κανείς ποια από αυτές τις ταινίες προτιμώ είναι σαν να θέλει να μάθει ποιο από τα παιδιά μου αγαπώ περισσότερο. Αγαπώ όλες αυτές τις ταινίες and -I'll speak in English now. Any movie is a lot of effort. As you said, sometimes they succeed financially, sometimes they don't, sometimes they succeed creatively, and sometimes they don't.

But a movie like "Master and Commander" was a work of love and a work of great effort. A movie like that must be done properly. You can put someone on a ship and shoot close-ups, limit the costumes to a few and avoid some of the sounds and effects, but it won't be the same film. That film actually cost 122 million dollars, which is a lot of money and it's particularly a lot of money for a film that does not conform to what Hollywood usually thinks of as films that will have enormous commercial potential.

It's not a movie for teenagers; it's not a movie for people that don't have an understanding of history. It's a dramatic film; it's not a comedy. Except for one brief sequence, there are no women in the movie; it was a big decision whether or not to remain faithful to the books on which it was based, or to throw some random love affair in the middle and we decided not to do that.

In the end this film was nominated for 7 Academy Awards and 10 -thank you-I thought 11 and I said no that's too many; maybe 7, I thought. Obviously it got enormous recognition from the Academy and performed very well, it was not one of our biggest blockbusters, but it's a film whose journey was very satisfying and an important work.

I don't make these movies. Very talented people make these movies and very passionate artists make these movies and my job and all the studio people's role is to really make that possible, to guess, to take the risk, to provide the money, to provide guidance. But it's also to stay out of the way and let creators create and let them realize their visions. Even if you speak to a director about what the film will be, no matter how detailed the scenario, no matter how beautiful the storyboard is, that film is in his or her mind and in his or her vision and it's only when you begin to see it daily, when you begin to see the film emerge, that you really understand.

A particular example of that is the first movie we made with Baz Luhrmann, "Romeo + Juliet". I think of that as one of the best examples of complete and total faith in a filmmaker. Baz had made a small

movie in Australia called "Strictly Ballroom" which was distinguished by the fact that it was beautifully composed visually. It was excellent storytelling and what was really beautiful was the visual images that he created for what was otherwise a pretty simple love story.

And so, when Baz came to us and said "I have this idea, I'm going to make this movie with this young kid" -and you have to realize that not many people knew Leonardo DiCaprio at the time and Claire Danes was a television actress, very talented woman-; so, he says "I'm going to do "Romeo + Juliet", "Oh, that's nice", "but it's going to have purple cars and Dolce & Gabbana costumes and chrome guns and it's going to be post-modern but everyone will speak Shakespearian English from the original play, the original prose".

And, you know, for a studio person to hear that, your mind sort of ceases for a moment. "Say that again? We are going to do what exactly?" And you just really say, "I really can't put my brain around it, I can't see that". And then "Who is going to go?" Some people will like the idea that it's a romance, but kids don't want to read Shakespeare at school, they don't want to go and pay 10 dollars to see it, and that's not going to work. And then all the Shakespeare purists and the art film people will say, "This is a perversion of Shakespeare, we can't see that". So, you go back and forth and Baz says "I just need 12 million dollars".

That's when the job becomes really wonderful, because 12 million dollars to an individual is an enormous amount of money, but in the world of Hollywood films it's not a very significant, substantial budget. And every once in a while you have to say "You know what? Let's go see what that looks like and let's give this very talented person that opportunity". You don't get to do that very often and it doesn't always come out in the way that "Romeo + Juliet" did. And, by the way, the other thing I didn't mention is that "Romeo + Juliet" had been done half a dozen times; it had been done by Zeffirelli, it had been done by everyone. It was not something that no one had seen, but no one had seen Baz Luhrmann's version of it.

And then when it came time to do "Moulin Rouge", well "Moulin Rouge" that's very exotic, everyone knows all the exotic nature of "Moulin Rouge" in the turn of the century and Paris and all that art and beauty and so on. And so now, that's a good idea; of course that had been done many times before, but you say "Okay, "Moulin Rouge", why not? How will that be? Do you have a script?", "Well, I'm working on it".

I think, even up to this day, I'm not sure if the complete script of "Moulin Rouge" actually exists. I know that about two hundred of them actually exist but I don't know if the final version actually exists. And it was interesting because when we started the movie Baz had of course told us many things about what his plans were, but he didn't tell us that most of the movie was conveyed and the dialogue was conveyed into music and lyrics and singing. And that was sort of a surprise and a new idea and we thought: "Oh, okay" and once again we just said "let's do it".

So, those are the moments, moments like that. "Borat" was once again just an issue of complete faith to the creator's talent. What they did was they got in a van and drove across the United States asking people strange questions; for about three months Sacha Baron Cohen remained in exactly the same suit that you see in "Borat" without ever cleaning it. So as the film went on, it became more and more interesting to the people he was interviewing. It was a very cinema variété, but again it was one of those things that you say: "Let's just take a leap".

"Braveheart" was another film that I had the opportunity to be much more involved with earlier in my time at Fox and I remember reading the script at that time. I was running the international operations and -we don't usually do this- but I had the script copied and sent out to all the offices and said: "I want you to read this thing because if someone tells you, there was this great warrior in Scotland in medieval times, you're not going to really understand what we're dealing with here and you should really read it".

And from that time on, everybody involved in that film was a convert, it became a work of enormous emotional involvement and I think, even though Mel Gibson was an enormous star, because of the subject matter once again "Braveheart", like "Master and Commander", was not the usual Hollywood kind of movie. And it was that sort of passion and that belief and that understanding of the power of the movie, the power of the story, and then how well Mel executed it that made it such a huge success in so many ways. And that night at the Academy awards, it wasn't the favorite movie to win, but it certainly it was *our* favorite movie to win, but that was just the end of an amazing journey. So those are the films, the ones that are not obvious, the ones that are not easy, the ones that are not simple.

The other kinds of films that you enjoy, films like "Independence Day" or "The Day After Tomorrow" or "X-Men" are really works of a combination of creative energy and enormous amounts of resources and money and people and effects and planning. When you get this right they can obviously be enormously successful. In those as well you have the same sort of belief but I just hope that we get our 130 million dollars back before Mr. Murdoch calls. It's kind of the purpose on those movies and those have been enormously successful for us as well.

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Μιας και αναφέρατε τον Rupert Murdoch

Jim Gianopulos

I shouldn't have.

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Να ρωτήσουμε σε ποιο βαθμό φαίνεται και πού βρίσκεται, σε ποιο βαθμό, σε ποια κλίμακα είναι η δικιά σας αυτονομία σε σχέση με τις αποφάσεις;

Jim Gianopulos

Καθόλου. Absolutely not. The way I describe the relationship with Rupert, apart from the fact he's been, I should say, very kind with me. I know how he's perceived and he is truly very gentle and gracious, a pretty smart and decent man. But the way it works with Rupert is, if the numbers, if my results are good he doesn't have many questions; and if the results are bad, I don't have a lot of answers. So, it works that way.

But it's interesting, you know, because he never asks; we have different political viewpoints which he accepts because all of Hollywood has, or most of Hollywood has a much more liberal view of things than other parts of the country, but he never asks about things like that. What he asks is: "What are your guys doing?" and it's periodic, you know, "What's new, what's happening?" The first question is interesting because he is a journalist at heart and his soul is still very fervently journalistic.

The first question he asks is "Is it a good story? Who's in it?" But it's always "Is it a good story?" and sometimes "How much will it cost?" Those are the two questions that I always get and they're usually just a few, are "Is it a good story?" and "Do you believe in it?" The "Do you believe in it?" is really a translation of "Do you realize your ass is on the line if you're making this?" But it's a real, "Do you believe in it? Do you feel the passion to make it? Is it something that you feel good about and confident?" The answers to these questions are "Yes, make the movie".

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Υπάρχει περίπτωση το αποτέλεσμα μιας από τις ακριβές αυτές ταινίες να μην σας ικανοποιήσει και, αν ναι, λόγω αυτού τού γεγονότος θα δώσετε ίσως περισσότερα χρήματα στο μάρκετινγκ και το promotion της για να την βοηθήσετε;

Jim Gianopulos

Well, και ναι και όχι. Για την πρώτη ναι, γιατί την έχουμε πατήσει όπως λένε αρκετές φορές και στο μάρκετινγκ. Μερικές φορές νομίζει κανείς ότι αν κυνηγήσει την ταινία με μάρκετινγκ μπορεί να

βγάλει κάτι παραπάνω, άλλες φορές το αποτέλεσμα είναι ότι θα χάσει η ταινία και τα λιγότερα που θα ξοδέψουμε τα περισσότερα θα γλιτώσουμε.

“Solaris” was one of those movies. “Solaris” was a famous science fiction book, some people may know it; it had also been made into a film in Russia, but it was a passion of James Cameron to make that movie and he bought the rights to the book and developed the story. And for those that may not be familiar with “Solaris”, it’s a story that takes place in the future and there’s a planet that people are watching because it has unique characteristics and they send a ship up to explore this planet and the ship isn’t heard back from. They send messages. At first strange messages come and then no messages come.

So they get another astronaut and they say “You have to go up there and find what’s happening at the observation station in Solaris”. So this guy goes and he arrives there and everyone on the station is very strange. In fact, they’re acting psychotic, very unusual, doors are slamming; people are hiding. He’s not sure what to do. He lies down on his bed to rest and he feels the soft touch of a woman that makes love to him and it’s very passionate and he realizes that it’s his wife. The only problem is that his wife has been dead for 5 years so it’s his imagination.

And we learn that this planet has the ability to look into your mind, your psyche, your soul and create for you whatever your deepest memories, your fears, your strongest emotions are and make them real. So that’s a pretty cool story. So, James Cameron wants to produce it, originally wanted to direct it, he wants to produce it, he says, “Steven Soderbergh wants to do it”. Steven Soderbergh is just the one, the Academy award guy; he was nominated for two Academy Awards, for “Traffic” and “Erin Bronkovich”. Obviously he was about to do “Ocean’s Eleven”, at that time Steven Soderbergh, best working director, one of the most successful directors in Hollywood.

So I say, “Well that’s great. Okay” and “Great”. So, I went and met with Steven and a couple of days later Steven calls me: “By the way, I hope you’re okay with it, but George Clooney wants to play the part”, so I said “Thank you! I really appreciate this”. I need it at this time! So, it was one of those, “How could this movie possibly fail?”

I told you the kind of sexy exciting version of the story but the book has very deep, psychological, emotional, human aspects to it. What is life? What is death? What is psyche? What is emotion? What is feeling? And it can be very metaphysical. That’s the detail that Steven Soderbergh hadn’t really fully explained to me. Which is, he wasn’t interested in any of the cool parts, George Clooney trying to figure out how to keep making love to his wife who is dead and all the scary things that were happening on the spaceship. No, he wanted to explore the existence of God and the metaphysical aspects of this man’s mind, which was beautiful and actually a very well made film, but impossible to sell commercially.

So, we were faced with that. We had this long weekend, one of the biggest in fact. Thanksgiving weekend in the States is a very big weekend because the holiday falls on Thursday, so Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Five days we’re sitting there, right there on Wednesday with this George Clooney - Steven Soderbergh movie produced by James Cameron. What do you do? We know that the audience that comes to a George Clooney movie will see this thing that will go completely over their head. We could have sold it as an art film but not all the reviews were very kind.

So we thought, well we’re in it already for tens of millions of dollars, let’s do it. And we spent an enormous amount of money and made very little. It was one of those situations that you say, “Well, we tried”. But it was that kind of decision because we felt the movie deserved it. Certainly we had so much at risk at that point, so we had to market it aggressively. But it’s one of those situations where you know that you’re facing something that you’re going to have difficulty recovering from. But that’s the good news about another aspect of working at a studio and the nature of the studio

is that, I have the privilege, I'm the custodian of 80 years of great films made by other people and all those films are working, playing on television all over the world, being sold as videos, generating fans. So, even though it was a big financial loss, I kept my job, the studio survived, and life goes on, you know, it's one of those things.

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Να δεχτούμε ερωτήσεις από το κοινό;

Jim Gianopulos

Sure.

From the audience

Mr. Gianopulos, especially after watching the Fox reel, one question comes to my mind. Is there a room from a filmmaker that speaks a minority language like German or Spanish, Italian, Greek or Portuguese?

Jim Gianopulos

It could be.

From the audience

Is there a room for a filmmaker who's speaking, ας πούμε ελληνικά;

Jim Gianopulos

This is a question that comes up many times, not just among my friends here in Greece, but with people that approach me. Obviously I am very biased. We get a lot of submissions. It's something that I take personal interest in. I try very hard. I suspect, after this visit, it may become more difficult, but I try very hard to answer every submission that comes from Greece and we haven't succeeded yet in finding something, although once again I heard, I think probably three or four times here, -it's not a Greek film though- but "Why didn't we have "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"? Can you explain that?" There's a long story behind it. I wanted to do it but that's a separate story, which, if you're interested, I'll tell you later.

To answer your question, here's the reality. The reality is there is no bias against foreign language films; let's just say full foreign language films. There's no bias against it, there's no decision that says, "We will never do a foreign language film". But the problem is that America has so many, not all of them as I said recently to an interviewer, I wouldn't call all of the 500 films that are made, 600 actually, that are made in the US or in England or Australia, English language films; I wouldn't call them all breakthroughs in cinema, they're not all giants of art, but there are many films. And as a result, the American audience particularly has become accustomed to liking films in its own language.

It doesn't mean that there haven't been -and we all know that there have been many over the years- foreign language films that have succeeded, but the American audience is not used to watching those films; we've tried several times. Zero chance, nothing. I mean, a good example of that is "La Vita É Bella" (subtitled) which made 50-60 million dollars and they felt, "Oh, that's an intelligent audience. If we dub it, a broader audience can see it". Nothing, not even a million dollars.

The point of that is that every year great films from all over the world -and certainly I'm most interested in Greek films- come and there is so much to choose from the product that America makes. And I know this will probably sound disappointing, but if you take all of the films produced, all of the foreign language films, it's often, you know, like a blade of grass trying to grow through the concrete, to break through the wall of audience resistance because for studios and distributors, I think, in the most basic sense, if there's an audience, if we can make a borer on it, why not? That's the reason; the main reason is that audiences are resistant. They view foreign language films as art films. Even when they're very popular, even when they can be very successful, obviously we always see films throughout the world that are powerful and very well-made. That's one aspect of it.

The other aspect that is also worth noting is that Italy, France and Germany make great films. Italian

films don't even make it over the Alps, to get to Germany much less to the United States. Sometimes there's a reason for that and one of the reasons is that films that resonate and have power in their language and their culture, that speak to their society, that speak to the way that people think in their country are powerful for that reason. And for that same reason it's more difficult to make them relatable in other countries. That's not true in every case, it's not particularly right or fair, but I think it's one of the reasons that one would say: "Look at this film! It's the biggest film of the year! Here!" It didn't go 1,000 kilometres east to the next country. So, I think it's partly that the power of local cinema is often rooted in its own emotional context.

That doesn't mean that a great story shouldn't be able to travel all over the world, but last night my friends and I were talking about a film, I thought an excellent film; my grandmother was from Constantinople and I have a sense of Πολίτες and Πόλη and relatives that I grew up knowing there. So, when I saw "Πολιτική Κουζίνα", which is a beautiful film, but looking at it with my American eyes, I thought if I was sitting here, watching this film subtitled, there would be a hole in the film and that hole would be the understanding of what it means to be a Πολίτης, to feel Greek but not Greek, to feel strange in the country in which you live, to feel connected to the country you left behind, to feel the pain of a century of suffering.

The film as it was made didn't need to say that. If you had a character in "Πολιτική Κουζίνα" saying: 'You know now, when in Asia Minor, we had the exchange of population...', all of those historical things which every Greek knows, they would have to be explained for someone to fully appreciate the power of the emotions of those characters. I'm not saying the film was flawed; I'm simply using it as an illustration that the things that are in a local film taken for granted because that's why they exist, that why they're made for that country need to broaden a little bit to travel more.

Moreover, I often refer to a book that David Puttnam wrote, and David, who made "Chariots of Fire" and so many other wonderful films, for a brief period of time, ran Columbia Pictures. So he had the chance to see life from both sides, from an independent producer working in Europe and from running a Hollywood studio. David has always been a very strong proponent of supporting European cinema, cinema from other countries, global cinema and breaking down the walls of America and other countries. And basically, ever since he's left Hollywood, he's been beating us on the head and he's become a friend and I have enormous respect for him.

He wrote a book, which I would really suggest to those who are interested in understanding the dynamics of international film, art and commerce. Read it if you have the opportunity; it's called "The Undeclared War". And basically what it talks about is the history of cinema, film, what people argue about, but it was the Lumiere brothers who created film. For many years the majority of films shown in America were European films when they were silent. Because they were nice stories; here's a girl, here's a guy, loses the girl, he's got to find her. Beautiful stories, all you changed was the titles, a few other things and it worked.

And of course the American industry grew; the distinction was that European films were considered extensions of other art forms. They were extensions of theatre, they were extensions of opera, they were elite and they were considered expressions of art and often they were rooted in their local country. America at the time had no indigenous culture, had no culture of its own, and some might say it still doesn't have. But America was a combination of Italians and Germans and Hungarians and Poles and Greeks and whoever had emigrated so there wasn't any indigenous culture, there wasn't all that play that you saw as a child. It wasn't there.

When talkies happened, when sound happened, the import slowed down and America was making more of its own movies. Of course the war devastated all of Europe and in America during the war the movie business thrived because people needed things to entertain them, to distract themselves. So while Europe was in flames, America was building this industry. The destruction of

so many of the key filmmaking capitals in Europe suffered and although it recovered over the years, the industry in America became the global industry of film. Because it represented so many diverse cultures and nationalities, it was never made to be art or culture. It was made to be entertainment and it was made in a way that traveled all over the world.

So, you often have this discussion about what film is; is it entertaining and commerce or is it art and culture? And I believe it can be both. Not always in the same film -frankly most of the time not in the same film- but I think it's that reason; that one finds at American films, not all of them but American films are made for a global audience and local films have a difficult time succeeding through their distribution capabilities, through their relatability as foreign in other parts of the world. And it doesn't mean that cinema isn't enormously successful in every country of the world as we saw even recently in Greece with "El Greco". Any of the films that have surpassed American films, when you get it right, in a local country you beat every American film we've ever made. But it is difficult for all of those reasons for local cinema to have the same global rate.

The other thing that is true is that you make movies for a very broad audience; that's why some of the earliest cinema was a big train coming right at the theatre and people usually run straight from the theatre. But the reason you made a movie like that was that a train this big coming at you in a movie theatre was the same in every language. Nobody needed to understand anything. And the roots of that continue today in a much more sophisticated form, but they continue to operate today to defy the difference between Hollywood and the way Hollywood makes movies and the way movies are made in other parts of the world.

And then of course, there is the most fundamental characteristic of all, which doesn't apply to every movie, but to make the average Hollywood movie you must have as a budget 60 million dollars and a marketing budget of 40 million dollars. But to make a movie on that, we don't make all of them for 60, some of them for 10 and some of them for 100 or more. When you make movies on that level you have to say: "This movie will play everywhere and will be understandable everywhere". And that's when you get the ability to make "The Day After Tomorrow" and burying New York, you know, in 15 meters of snow. So, those are the characteristics.

Now, the final thing I will say is, we happen to succeed, have succeeded, we Fox not as much, but others have succeeded on foreign language movies. What happens though is that it's not a movie that you can sell broadly on television. It's typically the way these movies are released. It's in a handful of theatres in the big cities. They're reviewed; if the reviewers like them, the people relate to them; that happened to the "Full Monty". Nobody ever heard of the "Full Monty", of course an English language movie.

But we acquired for example a movie three years ago, which is the biggest film in the history of Russia, and made 30 million dollars, called "Night Watch". Timur Bekmambetov, an absolutely brilliant Russian director made this really cool science fiction movie. We did everything we possibly could, even to hardcore science fiction fans, like the kids that read comic books like "X-Men" or "Hulk". It didn't work when we tried to test the movie;

I'm not telling you this because it's going to make anyone happy. I'm trying to relate to the reality of the issue. What we typically do before we release a movie, we recruit people who will stand in the shopping mall and ask "Do you want to see a movie?" and you get 300 people and you ask them: "What did you think of it?" To get people to come to the theatre, college kids for free to see it, we looked forever. "What? Is it subtitled? No!" That's the reality and I don't think we should be discouraged by it.

I think the beauty of what new technology allows us now is in many things, but the two critical things are: access and the reduction of costs. Access through on-line viewing, through DVD obviously, through the ability to develop an audience for a film. It's not easy but you can create places

where people who have interest in seeing great cinema and great art and learning about it and can interface with people and learn about it in ways that you won't get on a television commercial. Those areas exist. And the ability increasingly to do digital prints, which don't cost 1000 dollars but 100 dollars, will allow some of these films to find a greater audience. But it has been and is difficult, to create that level of audience in the States and it's a struggle for me because I'm so often asked the question and I can understand the frustration of the filmmakers, especially really great filmmakers, talented filmmakers whose voice and vision hasn't been understood. Sorry for such a long answer.

Georges Choraface

Can I have the next question because it's related to what you were saying? You were talking about reduction of costs and the global impact of Hollywood movies and one of the elements of the impact is definitely the fact that the star system of Hollywood is a global star system, whereas all local star systems speak to the hearts of their local audiences. And recently you have set yourself along with Tom Rothman against some of the excess demands of the agents of the stars.

Jim Gianopulos

We're trying to make room for all the Greeks. It's quite uncanny. Tom Hanks was let in because he is sort of Greek. The others, we're getting around.

Georges Choraface

Okay, but is this indicative of some kind of change in terms of the position of the stars in Hollywood?

Jim Gianopulos

Yes. Tom is my partner and we are not always the most popular with agents but you can't please everyone. What has happened-I don't want to get into it, it's very complicated mathematics- but years ago stars had a percentage of the profits and the studios had developed very interesting ways of defining profits. There were all in the contract, no one was stealing anything, but as the costs grew and there were various fees and different things, movies that could be very successful at the box office didn't qualify in the definition of profit.

So, after a while, the biggest stars said "You know what? Don't give me a lot of arithmetic. You make the movie, you sell the movie and I want 10% of everything you get". Eventually people said "Alright". But then, just to do a little arithmetic, movies cost 50 million dollars. You gave the star 10 million dollars and 10% of everything the movie makes. When the movie took in 100 million dollars. That 10% of 100 equals the amounts that you gave the star and now you have to pay more. But 100 minus 50 the studio was in profit, so it kind of worked.

Over the years what happened what was the 10 became twenty, the 10 million became 25 million, the 50 million to make the movie became 150 million, the 10 million of advertisement became 100 million worldwide and so you had movies that had these enormous costs. And then the director had 5% or 10% in some cases. So you had 30% going to the actors from every dollar and so when the movie got to a place where it was costing that kind of money you found yourself in a position when the movie broke even, in other words, the studio just had it's money back, and I'm telling you, no arithmetic and no fancy pencils, nothing. Cash comes in, cash comes out, cash comes in.

The talent had accumulated 40, 50, 60 million dollars at the point that the studio had just reached its break even. That's no one's fault. Somebody said yes to that or somebody forgot to do the arithmetic and it was found that this was something that had swamped too much in the other direction. So basically the discussion becomes not per what percentage you pay, how much up front percentage you pay an actor. It became 'when do you continue paying profits before the studio has recovered'? And more and more I think, because of the cost of these movies, the talent has begun to understand that.

We still make movies with the biggest movie stars in the business and gratefully, happily pay them their full fees but when possible, we look to ways that we can say: "Look, up to here you've made this, now let us catch up and then we'll continue paying you your future profits". It's just an adjustment of the imbalance; it's not a resistance to stars. That's one aspect.

The other aspect is that some stars want a great deal of money for one kind of movie and it's not that they are not worth it, but a different movie may not allow you financially to pay the same amount. And so there we've made some very creative arrangements, we've made a movie called "Walk The Line" that was the story of Johnny Cash, big musician of the 60's. Certainly not everyone internationally would know Johnny Cash, not everyone in America listens to Johnny Cash, not everyone who's 18 years old has ever even heard of Johnny Cash. So, how do you do that?

Those people were trying to make the movie for 50 million dollars for many years, -I think a decade- and I have a sort of background in music, I always loved it. I thought it was a great idea because it was Johnny Cash at the birth of Rock n' Roll, but it was set in 1956 to 1965 or something, so we said "Okay, we'll make it, but not for 50, we'll make it for 30". Still, 30 million dollars is big money.

And we said to Reese Witherspoon, who had done primarily "Legally Blonde" and comedies like that, but whom we knew is a truly excellent actress, "You get X. We can't give you X but we'll give you Y. But if the movie succeeds you'll get a much bigger piece of the profits". And that was an opportunity for Reese to show people "Wait, I'm not just that silly girl in "Legally Blonde", I can act". And she proved that by winning the Academy Award. In the end she got much more money than she had made in any other comedies in total because she had taken the creative risk with us and we couldn't pay her fast enough for doing that. So, it's not the rejection of stars; it's exactly the opposite. It's trying to bring stars under an economic model that doesn't kill you.

From the audience

Γεια σας. Είναι μεγάλη τύχη που σας έχουμε μαζί μας. Πραγματικά σας αντιμετωπίζουμε λίγο σαν τον ET ή έναν εξωγήινο. Ζούμε σε πολύ διαφορετικούς πλανήτες κινηματογραφικούς για αυτό, συγχωρήστε με, θα σας κάνω δυο πολύ απλοϊκές ερωτήσεις. Η πρώτη είναι σχετικά με κάτι που είπατε για το "Solaris". Αγοράσατε είπατε τα δικαιώματα του βιβλίου και η δεύτερη κίνηση ήταν να αναπτύξετε το σενάριο. Σας παρακαλούμε, πείτε μας τι είναι να αναπτύξω το σενάριο για σας; Πως το κάνετε; Σε απλά steps.

Η δεύτερη ερώτηση, έχει καλυφθεί κατά 60% ήδη και είναι σε σχέση με το πώς ταξιδεύει, πως μπορεί να κινηθεί μια ταινία που δεν είναι αμερικανική στον κόσμο και ας υποθέσουμε εσείς ως ET με αυτά που γνωρίζετε από τον άλλο πλανήτη, τι κινήσεις θα κάνατε για να μπορέσουν αυτές οι φτωχές ανεξάρτητες ελληνικές ταινίες που μιλάνε κινεζικά, όχι ελληνικά να κινηθούν στον πλανήτη; Ευχαριστώ παρά πολύ. Καλώς ήρθατε. Είναι μεγάλη μας χαρά που μας μιλήσατε σήμερα.

Jim Gianopulos

Ευχαριστώ. I've been called a lot of things but ET, this is the first time. But I'm going to tell my daughters. They'll think it's cool. Το σενάριο. You don't build a 100 million dollar, 200 hundred million dollar museum without very careful designing, planning and preparation. And that for us is the script, whether it's a 100 million dollar movie or a 5 million dollar movie. In the end, it's what we make the decision to proceed on, which is why things are so difficult at the moment, because we have a strike of writers, which hopefully will end soon, but, the scenario, the script is everything. It's not always true, and as I said there are times like "Moulin Rouge", where the nature of the project is unique to that particular filmmaker, but that's a one in a million exception.

So, what happens? How does a movie find its way? Well, there are several ways. We buy a book, "The Devil Wears Prada", we adopt a book, "Solaris". You take a 200-300-page book and you reduce it to 105-110 pages. It's not always easy to convey all the strength and power of a book in a one and a half hour movie. It is a very complex process.

To give you an idea, at any time we have between 100 and 150 projects in development. What is development? For some people, this development helps because their ideas are waiting for someone else to write it yet again, to make it that much better. The movie "Castaway", for example, with Tom Hanks. "Castaway" was in development for 10 years. It was an idea that had come in and Tom had expressed an interest in it. When someone like Tom Hanks said "I want to make that movie", you're trying to figure out how to make that movie as fast as you can.

But, it was a movie in which the main character doesn't speak for 45 minutes. He is in complete silence except for "I have made fire" and a few things like that. He's there for 45 minutes. You're alone with someone on an island. How does an audience react to that? "A Night at The Museum" which is a very easy idea; a guy gets a job at the museum, everything comes alive. Seven years in development. Why? Well, for one thing, it cost a hundred and something million dollars to make the dinosaurs run back and forth, so you want to make sure that you've got a really good strong story.

Let's put it this way: It's not the way we like it, because what we would like is to take a script, make a change on page 3 and on page 27 and give it to a director and make a movie. But when that happened, when we made movies with unfinished scripts, with scripts that are not fully where they should be, those have been our biggest mistakes and the times when we found ourselves disappointed.

So, there is that process of development and sometimes what happens is, a certain writer can take a story a certain distance. They can reduce that 500-page book to a great script and a great 2-hour movie. But their dialogues are poor; they haven't been able to figure out why the lovers part or why they come back together or make you fully understand why William Wallace decides to give up everything to fight for Scotland. And so you give it to another writer. And that writer fixes those things and changes some other things that take you back in a different place. So, it's an imprecise artistic process, but it is at the very heart of what you need to do to make great films.

As I said earlier, on the subject of Greek films I don't have a simple answer. I do believe and I have to believe and I think any filmmaker will always believe that they will find their way. I wish I could tell you that there is an easy way. A festival like this and other festivals around the world is one fantastic way. We recently did a festival of Greek film; we are going to do it again in June. We had a lot of the same discussions there. How do we do this? How do we break through?

I think it is a matter of finding people who believe or understand and constantly networking with them. There is no easy way. You know, send it to all the independent film distributors, in every country of the world. Have DVDs made or show short films or go spend some time. Do what a lot of people do. Find a room somewhere in Cannes or near Cannes and walk around the Croisette. Is it likely you'll become instantly a success? No, but there's a better chance of that than staying home. And it can be very discouraging and frustrating and disappointing to know that you have a vision or a completed great film and you haven't been able to convince anyone, but that's the nature of art generally, of cinema certainly and most of all, the movie business. That's just the nature of it. I mean, there are great scripts probably sitting in some corner of Fox that one person read and "Nah, I don't know. I don't think so." And then someone else finds and says: "Wait a minute! The only thing it needs is that."

The language barrier is the issue I really do not have an answer for. It's been a conversation in the Hollywood community particularly for those who have an understanding of the international market for as long as I've been in the business, 25 years or something. My answer is just keep believing in your work, in your art, in yourself and keep trying.

From the audience

I just want to go on with this question. You have this understanding, because you were head of the international operations, of markets abroad. How do you think digital distribution will change

that? I mean, will it help independent distribution and producing or will it change a lot?

Jim Gianopulos

Well, we talked a little about it. The answer is yes. The answer is yes because when you talk to people who tell you about their first student films, everybody's biggest problem was: "How do I borrow a camera? How do I find leftover film to make my movie with? How do I convince someone to develop it cheaply?" All of those costs and obstacles are gone.

From the audience

Talking about distribution?

Jim Gianopulos

There are two kinds of distribution. You can post a film on the Internet, but we get into the biggest problem about marketing, which is that your film can be distributed, but the problem is it won't be as easily marketed. So, there are sites that have independent films posted, and they post them and allow people to go see them. But you still have to find a way to stand on the roof and shout: "Go see my movie!" and that still remains a difficulty for the mainstream population. Because some people come to us all the time and say: "Here, the movie is paid for, it's free, take it!" and there are limitations to our ability to react even to that.

There are only so many movies that you can release each year and do properly and get the right attention, but the main reason -which goes back to the marketing issue- is that even a very modestly budgeted movie, a movie made for a half a million dollars or 2 or 3 million dollars still needs to spend, in the States at least, 8 or 10 or 12 million dollars to be heard. So, digital and the technology in general allow people to make it. It allows people to put it in a place where it can be seen. It allows people now, with the cost of DVD, to make thousands of copies, tens of thousands of copies, even millions of copies. But it can't help people find, of the multi-millions of things out there, one and say, "Oh, this is beautiful".

I saw a movie that was shown in the festival, I guess in English they called "Sugartown", but here it was called "Ζαχάρω". I just thought the movie was brilliant. It was a documentary. It's not something that would be easy for as to handle but I just thought the movie was wonderful and really a great documentary and filmmaking work and I would never have found out about it; my Greek friends here told me about it. It's one of the many and how could we know about it? So, it's that. That to me is the issue of physical distribution, not being able to find it, but being able to know about it so that you go and discover it. And then you just tell everybody you know.

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Να πάρουμε και άλλη ερώτηση από το κοινό. Κυρία?

From the audience

Thank you for the privilege of being able to talk to you.

Jim Gianopulos

Not often you get to talk to ET.

From the audience

Many Greeks are very proficient in the English language, but I'd like to ask you a practical question about how a writer living in Greece can get his English language films produced by an American studio. Do you write the screenplay? Do you write it all out? Do you leave something at the proposal? Do you try to get an American agent? Do you say something straight to the studio? What's the best way?

Jim Gianopulos

All of the above actually.

From the audience

That doesn't help.

Jim Gianopulos

I'll take them piece-by-piece. What is true and what I get a lot of times is that somebody calls me and says: "Why doesn't somebody make a movie about Archimedes? He was so smart. Everybody knows about Archimedes." Probably because nobody would go and see it but if you send me a script and I read it and it sounds good, sure, why not? It's the hardest thing to do, whether it's in the English language or the Greek language; it doesn't really matter. The English language avoids some of the "foreign, non English barriers". In any case, you can't just walk into the studio with a very established producer or with a track record or with some other previous work credibility and come in with a pitch "I have an idea. A guy walks in the museum and everything comes alive at night". That's a good idea. But you probably wouldn't get through the door so, I think, leaving things in proposal form, certainly if you haven't written anything before, is the best way.

Laeta Kalogridis is a great writer and a great friend, who's written a movie with James Cameron that we called "Pathfinder", and she's writing a movie now with Guillermo del Toro. She's a very established writer. Laeta could come in, or send a letter and say: "I have this idea". Because you know her, you say yes because she's going to write you a great screenplay; but writers who are at the earlier stage of their career can't do that. So, the best way is to write out the script if that's at all possible and it's great if somebody would support you and pay you to write it. But otherwise you just have to find the time and hold the passion to do it.

And then, there's getting in the door. One of the things that you'll come across is sending things to a studio or less so to a production company. We probably get 15,000 or 20,000 submissions of scripts a year and different material and different kind of things so it gives you a sense of how high that hill can be. And also how difficult it is for the people in the studio, for the production and the development team to find that one, "Oh, this is the one!"

But coming into a studio, if you don't have an agent, you're likely to get a very polite letter saying, "Sorry, but you have to be represented by an attorney or an agent". And the reason for that isn't because we like either agents or attorneys -don't think that we have something against them, but we're in no rush to create work for agents and lawyers. The reason is that there's less likelihood that if it comes through an established channel that it will be someone who is trying to set up a lawsuit later. Because for every studio, sooner or later, comes this "Oh, no, no, I had the idea. I wrote the script that's about a guy that's all alone and castaway, in an island". So that's the other issue.

I think for those twenty thousand, it does require a certain amount of networking, a certain amount of effort to try and get it to someone who is a little further up on the recognition ladder, if you will, so that you might be at an earlier stage or a writer might be at an earlier stage in his career. It doesn't have to be the head of the studio; it can be, by the way, assistants, the secretaries, they used to be called secretaries, now everybody's an assistant which is fine, but assistants in Hollywood at production companies, at agencies are wonderful sources because they're more inside, they know more usually -my assistant knows more on what's going on than I do in some areas and they're also at an earlier stage in their careers frequently.

So, whether it's from the assistant level, the junior producer, the established producer, anywhere that you can find your way in is good, even if that is not a place that's going to make your movie. The priest in the church stopped sending me scripts because everybody gives them to Father John. And then I said, "Father, have you read it?"; "No, I can't do that; it's in Greek". So, I end up saying "Don't send them to Father John, but find somebody who can bring you a little closer into the tent". It's like a great actor, it's like someone who has that talent in his work, in some small theatre, in some part of the world and saying: "I know, I could be Tom Hanks. They just don't know it yet. I know it." Sometimes it's a long journey before everybody finds out.

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Since you have a background in music and I also interviewed Jeffrey Katzenberg of DreamWorks and we asked him how he feels that his studio spends so much money on films like "Shrek 3" and a lot of youths opt to watch it on a very really small screen, like an I-pod for example, and he said that the music industry did that mistake to say when, where and how to listen to the music and they ruined it.

So, they said that they go for the best, there's a big screen with all the effects are going to be shown, everyone is free to watch the film in whichever way they want. I'm wondering; since there are a lot of films in 3D or real D coming out and since I think that in 2009 you are preparing yourselves for "Avatar" in Fox; which is the James Cameron film about the Titanic. I'm wondering if the 3D or the real D is just another trick to lure the audiences that stay away from the theatres.

Jim Gianopulos

There are all these people; we had a whole plan, we had the latest trick and now everybody knows it!

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Is there a substance to it?

Jim Gianopulos

There's a great deal of substance to it. But, thank you, because I think it's a really intelligent question and a really good one. Jeffrey along with myself and some others have been very involved in explaining and trying to change the perception or to explain the perception of what is 3D today.

But let me take the first part of the question; the key to any business is to give people what they want in the way that they want it. The interesting thing about technology is that it has enormously expanded the opportunity for people to enjoy entertainment. There used to be 3 channels, now there are 300. It used to be that if you weren't home at 8 o'clock to see the program you liked, you could never see it, but now you can record it and watch it later. It used to be that if you didn't see the movie in the theatre, you had to wait until it came back in the summer or whatever. All of that has changed and all of that is great news for audiences and it's obviously great news for studios, because allowing people that opportunity is not just good for business, but it allows more films to be seen by more people in more ways.

So there is no limit in our mind to what technology is capable of helping us do and audiences to enjoy. I did a study about people's habits and I thought, one of the ways to show it was, "What did the world look like 50 years ago and what does it look like today?" And you know, some of the things in entertainment we take for granted. Now there's not one theater, there's a multiplex. Now there's not one channel. All of those things. But the most interesting thing I found was that when you looked at it, there was a survey of people's self perception of how much leisure time they have, how much time they have available for themselves to do the things that they like: listen to music, watch movies, play sports, do any other things that they enjoy.

And what was interesting was it showed that people are essentially working the same number of hours that they worked 50 years ago, but their attitude about how much time they actually have available is different; they believe they have less now than they thought they had in the 1950's. Why? Because it's not true, they do have the same amount of hours. Because the number of things that are around us, the choices that we have, the attention, advertising, the pace of life convinces us that we have less time. So, time has now become a more precious commodity than access. Access is easy. Time is more precious.

Sure, it would be better to watch "Shrek" or any great movie on a large screen, but that means going to the theatre and dealing with your kids and family and all of those aspects, whereas picking up an ipod may not be the ideal visual experience, but it allows you to see that in that time that you have available; riding on a bus or sitting in History class, which is a lot of college kids are probably

doing. What happens is technology not only conquers the access problem but it addresses the time problem. So, that's where technology fits in.

Now, 3D is a very different version than the 3D that many of us grew up on. 3D originally was a trick; it was a gimmick, it was a way of convincing an audience, "Oh, you're going to see something different". It was very typical, especially in America, in monster movies. You had "The Creature from The Black Lagoon", "The Creature from The Black Lagoon Returns" and "The Creature from The Black Lagoon 3D" and the difference was that in 3D he came through the screen. Put that vision of 3D completely out of your mind because that was essentially two big cameras shooting the same actions and then two projectors projecting it in a very early stage of the glasses. The current version of 3D, which is entirely digital, is the Real D installation that we talked about.

Yes, things come out of the screen, but that's not the beauty of 3D. 3D is not pushing things out to the audience. It's pulling the audience into the film. "Beowulf" is a pretty good example of it, but when you see "Avatar", the small pieces that we've seen of it, is a completely different experience. There is just really nothing like it. And it's nothing like anything that has ever been done in the past. What was so interesting about it, when it was a trick was when they had, as I said, not so great movies, not so great directors and they gave them the 3D gimmick to try and have some reason for people to come to the movie.

Look at it, the filmmakers who are working in 3D today, James Cameron, Steven Spielberg who's still doing "Tintin", Peter Jackson, of course, "The Lord of The Rings"; Bob Zemeckis just made a second movie, he's making a third movie. The biggest and best directors are using it because for them it's another tool to achieve something that's in their imagination that they were never able to do. So, we have tricks, but this is not a trick. It's a really amazing different way to see a film.

I think it's an important thing to do for the business, but also certainly for filmmakers and definitely for audiences, because as the screen gets bigger at home and the choices get greater, we're going to need more reasons to bring people into movie theatres. And the main reason will be either to see the film that all of your friends are talking about so that you can enjoy it and so that you're not the only person at the cocktail party that's completely clueless. And because you're going to see it in a way that's not possible to see at home, and 3D is that.

From the audience

Hi, first of all I would like to thank Despina Mouzaki for bringing you here.

Jim Gianopulos

Yes, I thank Despina all the time for bringing me here.

From the audience

It's great having you here today. I studied Film Production in London and I completed my first feature in New York City. It's a gangster movie for teenagers and I have it here.

Jim Gianopulos

With teenage gangsters or old gangsters made for teenagers?

From the audience

No, it's made for teenagers.

Jim Gianopulos

Ok, great. Is it ok if I see it?

From the audience

Yes, I have it here for you.

Jim Gianopulos

No, I mean not being a teenager.

From the audience

I mean, you know everything so...

Jim Gianopulos

I'm going to teach you marketing afterwards. We're going to talk.

From the audience

Okay. So, I want to ask you about "The Full Monty". I was watching and watching and I was laughing every time I was seeing the movie. Did you buy it when it was finally made? How was the whole process?

Jim Gianopulos

No, Peter Cattaneo, a great director who's done another movie for us, had this script, originally a play and so we did this for 3 million dollars and it was one of those things that you just say: "Okay let's do it". And we did. That's one of those things for the artists. You know, Tom Hanks or Brad Pitt used to wait on a restaurant or work in a bar and now he's Brad Pitt. So, for a film executive you buy a movie; make a movie for 3 million dollars and it makes 250 million dollars. Those are the ones that you wait for and pretend that it's going to happen every day. But when it does, it's a good thing.

From the audience

What about "Borat" and "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"?

Jim Gianopulos

I knew the show, the "Ali G Show". Borat was one of the characters and they finally made an Ali G movie that was shown in England. I don't think it was even released in the US. And what it was, they had scripted it and it didn't feel natural because the beauty of what Sacha was doing was finding unsuspecting people and creating great comedic moments. So he came to us and said: "I want to do it, but I have to do it the way I do the show" which involves traveling around the country. And it was sort of one of those less sophisticated economic analysis. I said: "Well, okay." He's been in England, certainly everyone in England knows Sacha Baron Cohen. Less know him in the US, his show was not very well rated. But this is just another insight into the complexity of Hollywood economics. The movie cost 11 million dollars. Look at what it made in England. I said that if it does half of what it made in England we lose five million dollars. Let's do it. And then the movie made 200 and something million dollars. But sometimes you say that the pain of the loss won't be too bad. It really comes down to where you allocate risk and how.

From the audience

Μιας και είμαστε ήδη στην Οσκαρική σαιζόν, ήθελα να ρωτήσω κάτι σχετικό με αυτό. Καταρχήν αν υπάρχει κάποια συνταγή που εσείς ως παραγωγός πιστεύετε πως ακολουθείται για να φτιάξουμε, πως φτιάχνετε μια Οσκαρική ταινία;

Jim Gianopulos

Τι ταινία;

From the audience

An Oscar film. Is there calculated risk in how to make an Oscar-winning film? And secondly, what would your advice be on how to promote, how to make an Oscar campaign for the Greek submission, "Eduart"?

Jim Gianopulos

Someone just told me about that; I'm going to see, I think next Saturday, the Greek entry. Does anybody know what it is? It's "Eduart"? I'm going to see it, I don't know.

Well, you don't make a movie and say, I'm making this movie because it's going to win the Academy Award. What you often will do is just say it. That's how films like "Juno" get made. "Juno" - I don't know if you saw it, I saw it earlier in the week; I think Ellen Page certainly has excellent chances for an Academy Award. That's how we made "Sideways", apart from the fact that Alexander Payne is

Greek so how could you say no to that?

You see a film like Alexander's or Jason Reitman's "Juno" or "The Darjeeling Limited" or "The Savages"; "The Savages" is a really great example of two people both of whom have been nominated multiple times. Philip Seymour Hoffman is one. You don't make a movie like "The Savages" about two people watching or having to endure their father's death and all of the things and emotions that that brings up. Or movies about two guys who are not box office stars going on a week of wine drinking.

From the audience

Aren't those usually the outsiders?

Jim Gianopulos

That's what I'm saying. You make those movies because you believe that they will be seen by people who care about cinema and who will actually read a newspaper, which is not common in some of the teenagers who are going to the movies and this is why we use television to get to them instead of reviews. But there are people that actually read reviews and really react to what people think of movies and they will turn up. So, you don't make "Sideways", or "Juno" or "The Savages" or many of those films with a view that it will make millions of dollars. But you say, if we make it for the right price and the quality is there, so we call execution dependent to few, maybe who are familiar with that phrase; execution dependent means that the bull's eye that the filmmaker has to hit is small, because a big loud action movie has to be big loud and fun; it doesn't have to be perfectly done. But "The Savages" or "Juno" has to be pretty much if not perfectly made, very close to that.

So, you don't decide to make an Oscar movie, but what you say is: "Well, that audience will come and it's the kind of movie that could earn the sort of appreciation for its cinematic quality, that who knows, maybe will win an Oscar". We came very close at the last minute with "Moulin Rouge" and even last year, with "Little Miss Sunshine". "Little Miss Sunshine", at the very last minute, people said it's going to make it. But we didn't do it. "The Departed" did it. But those are the kind of movies that, you know, you don't make it for that reason, but you make it with that hope. That's the best way to say it. Was there another question?

From the audience (inaudible)

Jim Gianopulos

What's happened, what's become very common now in this Oscar season is people taking big advertisements in "Variety" and all these magazines and trade magazines and sending endless amounts of discs and papers. I'm on the board of the Academy and one of the things that we spend a lot of time on is limiting the amount of commercial outreach that can be sent to the Academy members. Because that just becomes like another, "Who's got the money campaign?" So we, Fox, have backed off in doing a lot these ads. We see the same ad day after day and it's millions of dollars spent; tens of millions of dollars on those. I don't think they really work.

What really works is word of mouth. The foreign language Oscar is chosen by a committee of a limited number of people; I don't know if it's made public. And the rule is that everybody, and that's why these are particularly devoted people, the rule is that they ask me every year and every year I say no. Not because I don't want to and I do end up watching a lot of the movies, but because there's a requirement that if you're on the committee you must see every entry, which is, I don't know 40 or 50 movies. And you can't vote unless you've seen them all. So, the bad news is it's a small group of people. The good news is it's a small group of people. So, if you can find a way to influence them, to work with the representatives from the Hollywood Foreign Press, the Golden Globe people. You have to be respectful and you can't say: "Hey, please vote!" But you can say: "Have you seen this movie? It's a wonderful film. Please see it. Here's a DVD. Would you please come with me to the screening?" and all of those sorts of things. It's a very personal, time-intensive thing.

But they work a lot better than putting some ad in "Variety" because there are a million other ads and it doesn't get noticed.

From the audience

Speaking about technology, the faster Internet connections now allow a lot of people to illegally download movies. What are the estimated losses for Fox from downloaded movies and what is your long-term strategy to combat this phenomenon?

And another question. During the last few years, we've seen movies like "Skycaptain and The World of Tomorrow" and "Sin City" and "300" which are shot against green screen and then the background is added later. Is that a way of the future? Will most of the movies be made this way in the future? Thank you.

Jim Gianopulos

On the first question, piracy is an enormous, an enormous problem. We're saying that it has practically destroyed the music business. How do we combat it? Well, you know, in the first years of working in the business, the biggest obstacle, the biggest challenge was to go find the warehouse with the big piles of VHF cassette and grab the cassettes and put the people in jail and these with you. The nature of internet piracy is very anonymous and so, if I had a pirated cassette years ago and I wanted to give it to you, I would have to mail it to you or send it to you or give it to you and now I would load it and send it to all of Greece at the same time. So that's the level of the problem.

And there is no easy answer. There are many answers, there's no single answer. And it will be a struggle that the industry will constantly have to fight because it is a technology that creates piracy, a technology that stops it, there will be a new technology to beat that stop and so on. And for some people it's a lot of fun. They think of it that way. They don't even do it to steal the movie. They do it to prove they can steal the movie. But in the end, the problem rises to a level where it just becomes so big, economically, ethically, so obviously unfair that it can't continue to exist.

In the United States nine Supreme Court judges can't agree. They very rarely agree on anything. They're seven to two, five to four. They always have different viewpoints. When the question of Glogster, one of the big internet sites, came before the Supreme Court, the argument was: "Well, you know, people can send pictures of their children to their grandmother" and nine judges said: "Give me a break. This is so obviously illegal. This must stop". It's not that they could stop it. What they said is, there is no discussion whether it's allowed or not. And now the question is how do you catch people?

There are many ways in which the industry has reacted, and what I think what has been most interesting for us is the big companies. Apple, Microsoft, HP. All these companies that are involved in making computers and creating platforms realize that if they try and offer equipment that only uses illegal content, eventually we will stop that and the customer will be unhappy. So they've actually, not as much as we hoped, but they have joined us in the fight by creating technologies that can read and stop illegal content, so that together they can participate in providing legal content to their customers.

In the same way, a lot of the ISP's, a lot of the systems that provide broadband internet access realize that if you have some kid who is downloading movies all day, that the person who is trying to send e-mail or trying to go to a website to learn something is doing it slower because all the capacity of the network is being stolen away by people who are downloading these massive amounts of data because movies are very big files.

So, there are a lot of reasons why there's effort, a lot of efforts and a lot of reasons to hope that the problem that will never go away will be something that we can at least live with and not get much worse. Because otherwise, the reality is, it will make it impossible to continue making and marketing movies if anybody can steal them any time they want to.

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Τελευταία ερώτηση.

From the audience

Hello, it's a question about something very recent. The ongoing strike of the writers in the States. I'm not going to ask you whether you will yield to their demands or not because you're in a very delicate situation as the head of a studio.

Jim Gianopulos

Thank you.

From the audience

But what I'm going to ask is: How does a studio prepare for such a strike because it has been rumored for many months? Do you have stored up scripts? And do you feel there will be problems in the movie production rate in the following months if that strike continues?

Jim Gianopulos

Well, the average time to make a movie from start to finish is between 12 and 18 months, so not only have we planned ahead to have our scripts in good condition for movies that we're going to be shooting in the next few months, but in addition many of the movies are already shooting or are finished in post-production and the final editing stages. I don't speak for the others but I'm sure to some degree they have the same plans in place. We have a full range of movies through next year and even well into '09 either ready, shooting now, about to shoot or about to finish. So, the impact of the strike, unless it goes on for a much longer period of time, won't affect the movie side.

It will and already has affected the television side because, you know, they make each week's episodes. And what's been a little more troublesome on the television side is that, not only have they not written all the episodes to finish the series, but the people who are working on finishing the episodes, many of them are part-writer, part-producer, part-showrunner and they refuse to work and as a result the television, many of the television shows, now have stopped until the strike is resolved so the impact there is immediate. The impact for us is longer-term if it's a reasonably short period of time because so many of the scripts, even the very few that weren't completely finished, are nearly finished; we'd be able to go very quickly back into full production. I mean, we are producing movies now.

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Πριν αποχαιρετήσουμε τον κύριο Gianopulos θα ήθελα την μικρή του συνοπτική απάντηση για κάτι που φαντάζομαι θα αναρωτιούνται πολλοί από το κοινό. Ποιο είναι, πιστεύετε εσείς το χαρακτηριστικό σας, η δύναμη σας που σας έχει φέρει σε αυτή τη θέση, αυτή τη στιγμή που είστε;

Jim Gianopulos

About me? I think the best way to describe it; I often wonder because it amazes me that I got to this position. I think the best way to describe it is, I worked really really hard in between lucky breaks and it's really that simple.

Thodoris Koutsogiannopoulos

Ευχαριστούμε πολύ.

