

Making the Movie Good

Stephen and Mary Pruitt express their love for film making and expose the challenges of making a film great.

Date: January 28, 2010

Duration: 3:15

Transcript

[Voice 1] The mother load.

The key to a good relationship is communication. You gotta talk to me. Where you from? Tell me about your life.

[S. Pruitt] Well, it actually started, we had written a play about fifteen years before, and we never did anything with it. Actually, I thought it was quite a good play, but it was a comedy, tragedy, and I said, well, we'll just start with the play and we'll work out from there. How much did the story change from start to finish?

[M. Pruitt] Yeah.

[S. Pruitt] Like the east is from the west. It was, it just changed dramatically, and it was still changing as we were shooting.

[M. Pruitt] We went with a particular actress, and because of a variety of things, we needed to change the plot in order to accommodate the appearance, the age, the persona of this particular actress.

[S. Pruitt] The only thing that ended up in the final version of the screen play was the character's first name, the first name of one of the characters, and that is all that was left.

[M. Pruitt] Oh no, and the fact that they were two males, and they were artists.

[S. Pruitt] I remember when we were sitting down, and we realized we had a miniseries as opposed to a film, and it was just like, this film is three and a half hours long. What are we going to do? And so, I just took it; we were on a trip somewhere. I don't remember where we were going, but I had a pen, and I said, "Gotta go; it's gotta go; it's just gotta." I just [shwik], [shwik], [shwik] through that thing, and by the time we were done, and even scenes that were breathtaking, so funny, and it's like; it's just gotta go, and so we ended up chopping it down. We ended up right at two hours, which is what we needed. It worked, but it was a lot of change on the way.

The objective is one thing; make the movie as good as it can possibly be, and that made it what it is. Is the film better or worse with this or not? As long as you have...

[M. Pruitt] You have to be loyal to the film and not the scene.

[S. Pruitt] Right, loyal to the film and not the scene, and that's exactly what it was, and in some cases, we just had to whack out the whole scene and redo it. It just didn't work; I'm sorry.

There was a couple of people who came and worked, played bit parts for us twice, and they ended up on the floor both times because it was just like, it was better without it. It wasn't because of anything they did. It just didn't work. Sometimes it just doesn't work, but we were able to put it together in such a way that now it does work.

The number one thing that we really learned is the importance of a good editor, and we had one of the great first-time editors that's ever lived; Kevin Harlan, and every time that he and I sat down to work on the film, magic happened, and I am just so thrilled with the work that he did for us. That was amazing.