

"DIRTY HABIT" Writer/Director, Bryan Root
Statement

When the idea of A NUN and A PROSTITUTE stuck on AN ELEVATOR was first suggested to me I LAUGHED. It sounded like A JOKE – which was a good start. But as I researched the subjects of prostitution and Catholic sisterhood it became MORE and LESS THAN FUNNY and, while there are plenty of DARKLY FUNNY moments at the beginning, this is ultimately AN ANTEDOTE to "PRETTY WOMAN." To keep two people on an elevator interesting (MINIMALIST PSYCHODRAMA) I had to go BOLDLY where the characters took me – which in this case was STRAIGHT TO HELL.

We were shooting TEN PAGES A DAY in my TINY, badly-ventilated GARAGE in JULY, so "INFERNAL" wasn't such a stretch. THE ACTRESSES were smearing ANTIPERSPIRANT ON THEIR FACES to keep their makeup from running. There were no wild walls. It was not a soundstage. We started calling it "The HELL-EVATOR."

"BRYAN'S INFERNO."

And if you start to think that I'm a GODLESS SODOMITE halfway through the film, well... Someone other than you or me will decide if I'll burn for it. See our MORAL STATEMENT @ <http://www.motherlodepictures/pages/credo2.htm>

Before "Dirty Habit" I was writing a rock opera about a mentally-ill musician/filmmaker who believes a consortium of MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATE SPIES, working in conjunction with the US government to bring about the END OF THE WORLD, has targeted him. That project, called "SPACEREX," was A BUST after 9/11.

But I'm stubborn, and while the "Patriot Act" and "Operation Enduring Freedom" and The 9/11 TRUTH MOVEMENT scooped my idea, I kept reinventing it. Or not.

It was like trying to ORGANIZE A BAG OF FARTS.

Meanwhile, my mentally-ill hero's worst fears seemed to be coming true. And for me, a musician/filmmaker, it all started getting too close to home. By the time our Christian soldiers had taken control of the ground in the Middle East, my SENSE OF IRONY had been COMPLETELY ECLIPSED by George Bush's administration.

In the interest of MY OWN MENTAL HEALTH, I started attending a Quaker meeting, shelved "Spacerex," quit smoking pot and – as I was casting about for a NEW IDEA – a friend of mine suggested a nun and a prostitute stuck on an elevator. This seemed like a nice, MANAGEABLE concept for a FIRST FEATURE. The limitation of sets and characters appealed to me after the convoluted, un-producible mind-f#*k of "Spacerex" and I STARTED WRITING.

Having lived in downtown L.A. in the 90's, I'VE KNOWN some CRACK-ADDICTS. One homeless prostitute who used to hang out in front of my loft would tell me stories about her clients and the disagreements they would have. She was a master of GALLOWS HUMOR. But she fell apart the year I was acquainted with her and, where she once talked to me on a friendly basis, soon she was just hitting me up for drug money. So I started avoiding her. It was very sad. This film goes out to her – wherever she is.

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ANECDOTES:

BASED ON FACTS: The WORKING TITLE of the film was "STATIONS" – as in "Stations OF THE CROSS" – with Leslie essentially participating in her own crucifixion. But NO ONE GOT THE CATHOLIC REFERENCE and they kept waiting for a TRAIN TO ARRIVE. That's when my wife came up with "DIRTY HABIT," which speaks more to the content and timbre of the film. In researching that title she found a NEWS item ABOUT an Italian PRIEST, arrested in a raid on a brothel. He had been EMPLOYING PROSTITUTES in a SIMILAR FASHION to my fictional priest and gotten caught at it. We discovered this a year after principal photography, but it was happening just months before I wrote the script. FICTION can barely keep up with FACTS. And I can stop WORRYING ABOUT the MOTIVATIONS and the PLAUSIBILITY of MY CHARACTER!

BAD HAIR DAY: KIRSTY came to re-shoots with SHORT HAIR. It wasn't going to match what we'd shot. We had no wig, it was Sunday and WE WERE F#*KED. REAGAN DALE NEIS (brown-haired Sister Amelia) had restored her usual blond hair and was there to feed Kirsty lines. Since REAGAN was OFF-SCREEN anyway – she actually LET our hair and makeup genius, Yvonne Ortiz, CUT HER HAIR OFF and use it TO MAKE a blond fall for KIRSTY. We all agreed that Reagan LOOKED very CUTE IN A BOB, and that she'd EARNED HER WINGS as a PRODUCER.

WRITER/DIRECTOR/SECURITY GUARD: We were ON LOCATION FOR SEVEN DAYS in an apartment building IN KOREATOWN. It was only twenty minutes from my home but I always had some fire to put out and... well, WHO NEEDS TO PAY A SECURITY GUARD when the DIRECTOR NEVER SLEEPS? I was tempted to go home to my family a couple times, and I thought maybe I was being a little bit too much the low-budget masochist, until the morning I WOKE UP WITH a total STRANGER standing IN THE ROOM, appraising the sound cart. I don't know who was more surprised, me or him, but he was gone before I could finish screaming "CAN I FUCKIN' HELP YOU?" And, from now on, I will ALWAYS SLEEP WITH THE EQUIPMENT. Unless someone else volunteers.

THE BAG GETS A VOICE: One day I was in the editing room, struggling with the WEIRD PROBLEM posed by A TALKING HANDBAG – pivotal in several scenes but JUST NOT WORKING – when MY DAUGHTER BURST in declaring that SHE WAS BORED. I was about to get annoyed at her intrusion but I STUCK HER IN FRONT OF A MICROPHONE instead. I had read adults for the role but the effect was always "Why doesn't Leslie just THROW THAT CREEPY THING AWAY?" But with a CHILD'S VOICE, it was a VULNERABLE thing that you couldn't DO THAT TO. And it worked as Leslie's UNBORN CHILD – completing my wonderful PICTURE OF HELL.

THANK YOU, ELOISE! NO, you can't watch the movie. SORRY.