



Trickshot Q & A - Richard Allison, January 2005

1. How did you get into Amateur filmmaking?

Well I started by just making stupid films with whatever I had to hand. I had to borrow a camera of friends, record over their holiday footage for stock and use my dog, younger brother and his toys as subjects. The big problem was always the editing which invariably used two VCRs, an old Amiga 500 and a fair amount of cursing.

2. How much does an average Trickshot production cost?

Actual costs were pretty low on the shorts, whatever it cost for fuel and a few props. For our feature *Eightball*, we bought in a load of toy machine guns from cheap import shops, the kind that are usually bright green, with a red cap on the barrel and 60% scale, you know, for kids. Then we spray painted them blank, extended the barrels and magazine with cardboard tubing and cassette boxes and added a strap. We're starting to spend more now on the features, £1,000 and up, mainly investing in better equipment, which is unfair to charge to the actual production as you can use it again.



3. Are all the actors in your films family and friends?

Mostly, yeah. It's a pretty close knit operation which provides a shorthand way of working as you have an instant rapport and common understanding with everyone on set.

4. Have you ever hired outside actors?

For, *Eightball*, simply because it was so much bigger in scale, we had to cast the net a bit wider. Sure all the old school faces pop up (more than once!) in minor roles, but we certainly didn't know any martial arts experts or attractive leading ladies in our immediate circle. So we cast our leads, Max and Jemma, through a friend in their drama courses.

5. How many films has Trickshot produced?

Working backwards, *Eightball* was our first action feature released at the beginning of 2004. Before that we did a 30 minute zombie horror called *Grave Matter* and a 15 minute action short called *No Choice*. Then there's our pair of spoof *Cyberman* movies. So that's five, not counting our DVD extra material and several embarrassing short films we don't admit to of course.

6. What film are you most proud of?

Er, probably, *My Best Friend's Brother is a Cyberman*, because purely by accident, it has transcended what it was supposed to be - a practice film intended only for *Doctor Who* geeks like me. It always gets a great response at festivals and plays on every level. My three year old nieces can watch it and be scared by 'the monster' not knowing what a Cyberman really is.

7. Have you aspirations into professional filmmaking?

If by that you mean, work in the industry, say on a Harry Potter film as a 2nd AD or something, then no, I don't. I like developing and producing our own material independently with complete creative and financial control, and I'm hoping our next film will break out as a professional release that can stand on it's own.



8. Can amateur filmmaking start with a £300 digital video camera, or does it require more professional equipment?

Yes! Now it's really affordable so go for it. It's amazing how much a DV-camera has come down over the last five years. If you spent the same again on a home PC with a DVD burner then there's nothing to stop you!

9. What editing software do you use?

I have the Adobe Video Collection, which includes Premiere Pro, After Effects and Encore for DVD authoring. I was one of the first to get their hands on Premiere Pro which I'll stick my neck out and say is now up there with industry faves Final Cut and Avid Xpress. But in reference to above Q, any cheap or bundled editing software is more than capable compared to the old days (see Q.1).

10. What tips can you give to any aspiring filmmakers?

I would start small but think big. In other words make an ambitious, short film. Certainly less than 5 minutes, ideally less than 2 minutes if you want to show it around (people get bored really quickly). This should be relatively easy to achieve with limited time and resources and means you can quickly move on and learn from your mistakes. If you don't have any actors, learn a 3D program and consider animating it (check out Fan Films at www.theforce.net for examples).

11. What is in the Trickshot pipeline?

We're releasing a new double disc DVD collecting our short films *Grave Matter* and *No Choice* which are packed with extra material we've been working on this last year. It'll be launched at March 2005's Memorabilia Fair at Birmingham NEC and on sale from our website www.trickshot-films.co.uk straight after (if all goes to plan). I've also written a new action-packed feature script called (for now) *On High Ground*, which we hope to be shooting in Scotland later this year.