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PREVIEW SCREENING AND PINWOOD DIALOGUE WITH MELVIN AND MARIO VAN PEEBLES

Saturday, May 8, 2004

7:00 p.m.

BAADASSSS!

MVP Filmz, 2004, 108 mins. 35mm print courtesy Sony Pictures Classics.

Directed by Mario van Peebles. Written by Mario van Peebles and Dennis Haggerty. Based on the original book by Melvin van Peebles. Produced by Mario van Peebles. Co-producer, Dennis Haggerty. Original music by Tyler Bates. Photographed by Robert Primes. Edited by Anthony Miller and Nneka Goforth. Production design by Alan E. Muraoka. Costume design by Kara Saun. Principal cast: Mario van Peebles (as Melvin van Peebles), Joy Bryant (Priscilla), T.K. Carter (Bill Cosby), Terry Crews (Big T), Ossie Davis (Granddad), David Alan Grier (Clyde), Nia Long (Sandra), Paul Rodriguez (Jose Garcia), Saul Rubinek (Howard "Howie" Kaufman), Vincent Schiavelli (Jerry), Khleo Thomas (Mario), Rainn Wilson (Bill Harris), Karimah Westbrook (Ginnie), Len Lesser (Manny and Mort Goldberg), Sally Struthers (Roz), Jazsmin Lewis (Working Girl), Adam West (Bert), Ralph Martin (Tommy David), Robert Peters (Bob Maxwell), Glenn Plummer (Angry Brother), Khalil Kain (Maurice), Pamela Gordon (Ethel), Wesley Jonathan (Panther), Joseph Culp (Attorney), John Singleton (Detroit J), Joan Blair (Brenda), Penny Bae Bridges (Megan), Mandela van Peebles (Angel Muse), E.J. Callahan (Bartender), Keith Diamond (Large Brother), Don Dowe (Officer), Brent Schaffer, Brian "Skinny B" Lewis (Panthers), Mickey Mello (David), Christopher Michael (Journalist), Tyrone M. Mitchell (Man), Alan James Morgan (Josh), David Allan Smith (Brewster), Nathan Wetherington (Jimmy), Robin Wilson (Excited Lady), Paul Roach (Pimp Paul).

Screening followed by a Pinewood Dialogue with Melvin and Mario van Peebles, moderated by David Schwartz, Chief Curator of Film.

About Melvin van Peebles:

Mr. Van Peebles has worked in every medium of the entertainment industry, from music (a three-time Grammy nominee) to television (an Emmy-award winner) to Broadway as a writer and director (11 Tony nominations), and after 30 years his blockbuster movie, *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, remains on Variety's list of all-time top grossing films. The film was recently released on DVD.

Mr. Van Peebles' works are taught at such distinguished schools as Yale, Harvard and Columbia. Scott Gentry's book, "The Film 100," recognized Mr. Van Peebles as one of the most influential people in the history of cinema for his commercialization of both independent and black films.

Mr. Van Peebles began his career as a 10-year old selling second-hand clothes to winos. Since then, he has been involved with, among other things, the Boy Scouts, Astronomy, Youth for Christ, the Strategic Air Command, the Merchant Marine, the Artillery, the Post Office, Cable Cars, Het

Nederlands Comedie, the ACLU, the Cinematique Francaise, the Harkness Ballet, Boston Marathons, Pinochle, the Block, Blues, Dues, the Senegalese Police and the Mexican immigration authorities. Recently, Mr. Van Peebles was awarded the prestigious French Legion of Honor.

His book, *The Making of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, upon which the movie is based and which serves as an excerpt from one of the volumes of his upcoming autobiography, is in its fourth U.S. printing. It has also been published in the U.K. and translated into Japanese. Additionally, Mr. Van Peebles finished personally translating the book into French, which will be available in December 2003.

He is currently writing a novel that is a cautionary tale from mankind's future entitled "Ratcatchers 2147", in addition to opening "Soul Cabaret" in December 2003, a French musical review at the Peter Brook's Theater in Paris.

About Mario van Peebles:

Never one to rest on his laurels, Mario Van Peebles has carved out a substantial career that is constantly redefining and inspiring modern cinema in the same revolutionary style his father pioneered in the 1970s.

Most recently, Van Peebles portrayed political icon Malcolm X in Michael Mann's *Ali* and starred in the indie feature *The Hebrew Hammer* with Adam Goldberg. He also appeared in the telefilms *44 Minutes*, *Crown Heights*, and *Ten Thousand Black Men Named George*, where he played the historical figure Ashley Totten, who helped start America's first Black union of Pullman train porters.

His feature directorial debut came with the critically acclaimed box office hit *New Jack City*, in which he also starred. Next, he would redefine the Old West directing and starring in the multicultural western *Posse*. Mario received a Director's Guild Award nomination for his telefilm *Malcolm Takes a Shot*, and he directed and co-produced the controversial, historical drama *Panther*, a film about the Black Panther Party for which he would win the Silver Leopard Award (among others) at the Locarno Film Festival.

Van Peebles' other acting film credits include Clint Eastwood's *Heartbreak Ridge*, for which he won a NAACP Image Award. He has starred in the acclaimed telefilms Alex Haley's *Mama Flora's Family*, *The Rickey Bell Story*, *Sally Hemmings: An American Scandal*, *The Emperor Jones*, *Gang in Blue* and *Riot*. He earned a Cable ACE Award nomination for his work in *Third & Oak: The Pool Hall*, co-starring with James Earl Jones and was awarded the Bronze Halo Award for *Children of the Night*. He also starred in the TV series "Sonny Spoon" and "Rude Awakening," in addition to directing and starring in several episodes of Michael Mann's series "Robbery Homicide Division."

Van Peebles' stage work includes "Waltz of the Stork," which was directed by his father, "War Letters," and "Oak and Ivy" in which he portrayed the acclaimed turn-of-the-century poet Laurence Dunbar.

Director's Statement/ About the production:

THE HISTORY

It's hard to comprehend the significance of what crazy Melvin did without understanding the political context in which he had to act. During the Sixties, most African Americans were considering themselves "colored." The subtext of being colored was that "colored" was just slightly different from white. As if to say, "Please let us have a small slice of the American pie. Please let us exercise our constitutional right to enroll in the same schools, sit at the same lunch counter or even in the same movie theatre with the rest of white America. Recognize our humanity, after all we are like you, we're just a bit colored." During this time the non-violent civil rights movement, spearheaded by Dr. King was making measured gains.

Cinematically, Hollywood for years had been acting with impunity, categorically dissing people of color. Hispanics were portrayed as oily bandits who "don't need no stinkin' badges." Native Americans were screaming savages circling innocent white settlers who just wanted to take the red

man's land – “The only good Injun was a dead one.” Asians were deferential houseboys bowing politely. And black folks were members of some strange shuffling servant tribe, mumbling little more than “yes suh,” “no suh.”

When America needed to get black folks involved in World War II, Hollywood did its part by inventing what my Dad in his documentary *Classified X* refers to as the “New Negro” or the noble “colored” character. They usually got their ass shot off in the fourth reel so the white hero could safely escape with the girl.

I remember as a kid watching “Star Trek” and wondering why Spock wasn’t the captain of the Enterprise. He was smarter, taller, more logical, and could clearly kick more “Klingon ass” than Captain Kirk. From what I could gather, Spock was the token Vulcan neo-Negro of the future. Spock seemed to be relegated to some sort of permanent unspoken intergalactic second-class citizenship. No matter how overqualified he was, our man Spock was never gonna get to be captain, or get laid on the Enterprise; he like us was “colored.”

Like brother Spock, Sidney Poitier, Harry Belafonte, Dorothy Dandridge, Lena Horne, and Diahann Carroll often easily outclassed their white counterparts. They were the brightest, the best we could be and yet Ms. Dandridge barred from the whites-only bathroom where she occasionally performed, had to pee in a Dixie cup. Colored audiences had to watch their new colored stars from the “colored only” section of the balcony. American apartheid was alive and well.

Brother Malcolm chuckled at us from his podium, saying it doesn’t matter whether you call yourself “Negro” or “colored” or “black” or “African American” or “Christian” or “Muslim” or “Baptist,” you ain’t nothing but a nigger to the man. He’s been whipping our collective asses for four hundred years, he’s just getting better at it. Malcolm astutely went on to point out that the “Ghandiesque” turn the other cheek non-violent approach to civil rights worked in India because the East Indians were a majority and the occupying British colonialists a minority; in essence a big brown elephant sitting on a little white one. But here in the wilderness of North America, the lost tribes of stolen Africans made up a minority of 12% of the population.

Malcolm said you’re talking non-violence to an enemy that doesn’t speak non-violence, to an enemy that will beat you down while you peacefully sing “we shall overcome.” An enemy that will sic dogs on students trying to enroll, turn fire hoses on you, jail you, lynch you, and blow up your churches.

Malcolm went on to say that you can’t sing your way to freedom, power concedes nothing without demand. “Do for self.” If they don’t want you in their restaurants, build your own. Don’t look for trouble, but don’t turn the other cheek if trouble looks for you. About Ali, Malcolm remarked with his West Indian-flavored wit. “Black people need to stop singing and start swinging; Ali didn’t get to be champ by singing up on freedom, he had to swing up on some freedom.”

If Dr. King was the carrot, Minister Malcolm was the stick—both necessary halves of the same revolutionary coin. Dr. King had a dream that one day we’d get freedom by peaceful means, Minister Malcolm X said freedom by “any means necessary...” and in the end America killed them both.

The ghettos across the United States erupted in anger and despair. The assassinations of JFK, RFK, and Medgar Evers only added fuel to the fire. Once peaceful colored folk were now getting seriously pissed off. Cassius Clay gave up his “slave name”, became Muhammad Ali and refused to go kill the yellow man in Vietnam for the white man that was denying us our human rights here at home.

Folks turned their back on the Caucasian standard of beauty, no longer straightening their natural kinky hair, they grew Afros. Terrified whites fled the inner cities in droves heading for the suburbs. Movie theatres became half empty barns. Studios couldn’t seem to gauge this rapidly changing audience (this was pre-multiplex). MGM was forced to sell off its back lot. Star driven flicks like Charlton Heston’s *Omega Man* and *Alex in Wonderland* bombed. People who once sang “We Shall Overcome” were now singing “Say it loud, I’m Black and proud.” The Black Panther Party for Self Defense rose up in Oakland in response to extreme police brutality and unemployment. The black

power movement had arrived in full force, trying to fit in, and be “colored” was over. The subtext of being “Black,” of course, is that unlike “colored,” it is the opposite of white.

Across America this incredible surge of militancy was taking place in the black community and yet Hollywood seemed oblivious. Ossie Davis had directed a black cop drama *Cotton Comes to Harlem*, and Poitier had slapped Rod Steiger back in *The Heat of the Night*, but by and large we were still being depicted on the silver screen as servants and mammies or overqualified übernegroes, noble coloreds trying to be accepted by the dominant culture. There was a huge gap between the explosive reality of what was happening on the streets and the surrealism of what was happening on screen. What Melvin did was fill the void.

Not only did he make the first revolutionary “black power flick” but his modus operandi was revolutionary as well. It’s like my father thought he was the Statue of Liberty for disenfranchised wanna-be filmmakers. Give me your tired, your hungry, your black, Hispanics, your hippies, women, and porn makers and they shall be my crew. Take all the folks who had been left out for so long, the cinematically disempowered and let them come learn to control their own imagery. Of course his goal of a fifty-percent minority crew would have been an impossibility if he did *Sweetback* union, like his first studio flick *Watermelon Man*. The “good ol’ boy” unions were almost exclusively male and white. Melvin took the chance of going non-union by making *Sweetback* under the guise of a black porno film. The union left smut films alone.

If you can cut off the head, the body will die. If you assassinate charismatic leaders like King and Malcolm, to some extent their movements die. The Panthers seemed to have learned that bitter lesson, rather than having one empowered leader they had several. Their slogan oddly democratic was “Power to the people.” They, like King and Malcolm, were most threatening to the status quo when they crossed the color lines linking up with the Brown Barrets, (their Hispanic counterparts) or the White Radical Peace and Freedom party. “Power to the People” meant empowering all, not only black. What Melvin did with this renegade indie film was not only empower indie filmmakers of all colors but put on screen that it was not starring a Hollywood actor but “the black community.” And he dedicated it to all the brothers and sisters who have had enough of the man. All power to the people.

As Jose Garcia, my father’s maverick Hispanic second unit cameraman on *Sweetback*, said, “there was a great sense of solidarity between the races back then, a sense that as young filmmakers they could somehow reach, inspire, unite and empower the masses.”

The graphic images of dismembered Vietnamese children that we saw in Life Magazine helped galvanize America’s feeling against the war. The first televised presidential debates between Nixon and Kennedy in which Kennedy handled himself in a presidential manner helped swing public opinion, elect a president and change the course of a nation. The film *Birth of a Nation* with its images of violent, lazy neo-primate darkies helped create the KKK. During the fifties and sixties the power of the media was growing exponentially. More and more it seemed that the gatekeepers of imagery and information could control public opinion and thus to some extent policy. It’s easier to repress a people if you can first de-humanize and demonize them in the media. Melvin, by doing his funky angry ghetto response to four hundred years of having the man’s foot in our asses, was taking that power back.

Although at age thirteen I had production assisted on *Sweetback* and played a couple roles in it—including losing my cinematic cherry—I was only peripherally aware of the slings and arrows my father was suffering during its making. He was forced to self finance, constantly on the brink of ruin, his crew got arrested and jailed, death threats, and yet he refused to submit his film to the all-white MPAA ratings board for approval. He said they’re not a jury of my peers, the dominant culture has been approving negative, crippling images of people of color for years, why should they decide what our cinematic agenda should be? The film then received an X rating. My Dad, true to form, printed up t-shirts that read “Rated X by an all white jury” and made it part of his marketing campaign.

At the film’s completion all he had left was about \$13, sight in one eye, and only two theatres in the whole United States agreed to play it. In spite of the odds, the film caught fire with the Black

Panthers who embraced it as a “revolutionary masterpiece” and made it required viewing for their members. Shortly thereafter the students, Yippies and Hippies came – the “mother country radicals” as the Panthers dubbed them.

In the end, *Sweetback*, a funky black X-rated independent everyone had passed on, out-grossed *Love Story* and caught the Hollywood studios totally off guard. If they won’t let you in at the bottom go in at the top. As Malcolm has said, “Do for self” – don’t beg for a seat at their restaurant, build your own. Melvin didn’t beg to be in their movies, he shot his own. By basically self-financing MVP was his own studio. The inherent risk with “do for self” cinema is personal financial ruin. He took that gamble for himself and our family and this time it paid off.

The rest is history. The studios quickly re-grouped and followed suit. MGM re-wrote a white cop script it had into black face and called it *Shaft*, then came *Superfly*, both with slamming soundtracks and the golden age of what would later be called “Blaxploitation” was born. As Dad often says, “the man has an Achilles pocket book.”

People often ask me about the Blaxploitation era, and like other visible minorities who have on some level achieved within the Hollywood system or behind enemy lines, I find myself in that awkward position of “cinema niggerologist.” I’ll inevitably be at some cocktail party trying to just get my little Merlot buzz on, or at some film festival often one of the few dark faces around and they’ll circle in and get me. “Mario is your Dad still alive?” “Didn’t he do this or that?” And what’s your opinion of Blaxploitation, O.J., rap music, affirmative action etc.

Sometimes the hardcore O.G. revolutionaries will pull me aside and remind me, least I forget, that my Dad’s flick was truly revolutionary, because it’s flawed character – by standing up against the “man” – made being a revolutionary hip. They believe that the subsequent films funded by the studios imitated the formula but diluted the revolutionary core. *Shaft* made being a cop hip, while they contended that *Superfly* was counterrevolutionary because it made being a drug dealer hip.

The more bourgeoisie despised *Sweetback* for its raw sexuality and it’s in the hood portrayal of black life; to them Melvin was an overrated troublemaker and opportunist. Some believe that any flashy images of us with Afros and guns were exploitative in nature. Others, more cinema black nationalists in spirit, resent the fact that after Ossie Davis, Gordon Parks, and my Dad, it was often white directors at the helm.

I suppose as I look back on it all, even if the films did eventually devolve into semi-stylish, ghetto, full-screen comic books, they did do one thing, bad or good – they did depict us as empowered. Even if only for two hours, we were Pam Grier or Richard Roundtree or Fred Williamson. Fuck it, celluloid escapist fantasy or not it beats the “yes suh” “no suh” tribe. At last, we too were finally Baadasssssed!

THE DEAL

The conventional wisdom in Hollywood is that audiences usually avoid biopics. Black biopics are even a tougher sell. The truth is that historically, at least here in North America when we raise our heads as brother Malcolm or Dr. King or the Panthers did, we get shot down. Hoover and his COINTELPRO cohorts did a pretty good job of wiping out our leaders and as the infamous FBI memo reads, “preventing the rise of any black messiah, anyone who might unify or electrify black people.”

Traditionally we’re often portrayed as victims, not as empowered. We’re slaves and chauffeurs or jumping up and down hollering “show me the money” and by in large this is the type of fare the dominant culture still rewards. When they tell our story we become relegated to exotic backdrop. When Spike did X, he told it from Malcolm’s perspective not some white reporter interviewing Malcolm. When I did *Panther*, it was their story. I didn’t create a fictional white character to usher us through the narrative as suggested. Singleton did *Rosewood*, Euzhan did *Sugarcane Alley*, all historical period pieces told from our perspective. Naturally, we’re at home with ourselves; we don’t need a white host.

Historically most of our black towns got burnt to the ground, our heroes got assassinated or ended up broke, or broken, in jail or on drugs. Most Americans, let alone hard working Afro-Americans, don't want to work all week long to spend their ten bucks on a movie just to see themselves getting their asses whipped no matter how noble a cinematic endeavor it may be.

Ali was different, he stood up against the system, sacrificed and triumphed and Ali is still here standing. During the seventies "Black is Beautiful" era, my Dad had written a line for a character in his Broadway play "Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death." The line was bellowed out by actor-director Bill Duke during a surrealistic boxing match, "Black is not only beautiful it's baaad too! It's fast, classsy, ass kicking, and name-taking too!"

I turned the line over in my head while my Dad sat there in Manhattan's warm afternoon light still gathering his thoughts. It hadn't occurred to me before how much it sounded like he was writing about the champ and now the champ was asking about him. I couldn't help thinking about how much the man sitting right there in front of me had sacrificed and done. Against all odds he had triumphed and lived to brag about it.

Me: ... *Dad what do you think about me doing the Sweetback story?*

I put it right out there, interrupting the silence as if he had been privy to my inner monologue all along. No reaction, he paused then asked, mildly annoyed at the change in subject.

Melvin: *A remake?*

Me: *No the whole period, your struggle to make it. The birth of baadasssss anti-establishment cinema. James Brown's the godfather of "soul," you're the godfather of "soul cinema". We could base it on your making of the SWEETBACK book.*

Pause... he removes the stogie from his lower lip.

Melvin: *Who's we?*

Me: *I don't know who we is yet.*

Melvin: *Well who we is makes a big fucking difference to me.*

Me: *I hear you.*

He eyes me. Takes a beat.

Melvin: *I love you son... but I don't want to get fucked on the deal.*

Me: *We'd option the book, the whole nine yards, if I can't structure a deal where I have creative and political autonomy I won't do it. And all rights will revert back to you...trust me Mel, it's just your life.*

I grinned slightly, he hates that Mel shit; Studio execs call him Mel. He refused to take the bait, eying me knowingly, a game we've played to perfection over a lifetime.

Melvin: *You want to hear about Malcolm's interview or not?*

Me: *All ears man.*

About a year later my writing partner, Dennis Haggerty, and I had written a feature film script based on MVP's making of *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*. Eventually our film would be entitled *Baadasssss!*, spelled the same way Dad spelled baadasssss, two A's and five S's.

Conceptually, I wanted our film to feel like some unseen camera crew had followed Melvin around while shooting the making of *Sweetback* and interviewing the cast and crew; our diverse ragtag "Greek chorus." I find it interesting when 'good' and 'bad' are not articulated, each character plays his or her own "truth" and, like life, their collective truths are often diametrically opposed.

I also wanted the film to go past the 'making-of' realm and capture the intimate difficult moments, like the ones between my father and me. I wanted to get inside his head and experience the creative and political state of siege he was under at the time.

This forced me as a writer to turn the emotional chessboard around and play my father's position to the best of my ability, not just his side of the argument against what was once mine but against the world. Later when I interviewed some of the real players from the time, we were often astounded at the accuracy with which certain events had been re-created. "That's exactly what your Dad said, did that mother fucker tell you that?" inquired one of his old crewmembers. And this is where things got bizarre. On *Ali*, I had experienced dreaming as Malcolm – consciously studying, immersing myself, and then being someone else twenty-four-seven until it became unconscious.

My experience on *Baadasssss!* was different. It was as if I had some paternal umbilical cord wired into my hard drive allowing me to channel directly. I'd be thinking as my father, reacting as him without ever first translating as me. I know him, have studied him, have sketched him, been taught by and fought with him long enough to know his game, his response in most situations. I soon discovered how much in fact I was similar to this man that as a kid I hadn't always liked and never consciously intended to emulate.

At any rate, Dennis and I had sent our script out to most of the studios around town and got passes. We received feedback like "original," "provocative," "powerful," "unbelievable," "Is this really a true story?" "Who's the audience?" "Is this art house or mainstream?" "Black audience or white?" "Too political." "Can it be more comedy or more drama?" "And how sexy is the sex going to be, is this R?" "Can't we make Melvin more likeable?"

My Dad's life was sexy, and political, and interracial, and humorous, and tragic simultaneously. To make it genre specific for the finance and marketing guys would be marginalizing some aspect of his persona. The one cat that got the script was Michael Mann - cinephile, historian, and unafraid of politically charged material. Michael Mann and his wife Summer had seen "Sweetback" on their first date.

In addition to his astute story notes, Michael, as producer, saw the inherent non-genre specific funding dilemmas we would clearly face. But he also noted another concern. He said he thought I had to play Melvin and he didn't picture anyone else directing it but me. I'm inherently familiar with the story (which is not always a positive) and I obviously had the passion for it. But doing both was a challenge. Doing both on an under the radar hardcore independent with limited time and money was a risk at best.

Flash backward a couple of weeks, Jerry Offsay was retiring as president of Showtime and producing a few one million-dollar digital pictures. A straight shooter Jerry had expressed interest in the project. We had worked together several times over the years but I didn't see this as digital. It had to be film man – 35mm, big, and a million dollars? For a period piece in L.A.?

It was Michael Mann who got me re-thinking digital. Portions of the visually lush *Ali* were done digitally and he let me get a little experience with it when I directed an episode of his series "RHDLA." The series was shot entirely digitally in L.A., often using a minimal lighting package at night.

Meanwhile the voices of my muse kept coming to me at all hours of the night. I'd wake up inspired and have to re-work some of the dialogue in the script or tighten some scene. Dennis would humor me, we'd get out the new and improved draft and still we were getting passed quicker than an Iranian hitchhiker on the New Jersey Turnpike.

Dad would call occasionally from Paris or NYC and he was cool. He knows the business and me well enough to know *no* news is *no* news and if I had news I'd tell him, so we'd just rap as father and son and leave the movie business alone.

We got other interest in the script but it was "could be, should be, might be" money. With each passing week that "no strings" million from Jerry looked better and better. My Dad had a sign in his office that read "If you don't like my principles I have others." I was sliding down the slippery slope talking myself into this shit, but how could I sell it to Pops?

I hooked up with a no-nonsense line producer who did up a bare bones budget on spec. The answer came back—we could afford about eighteen days to shoot the entire film *if* and only if we paid the crew, director, and actors close to bare minimum. I knew one director and actor who'd do it for scale and not give me any shit... me. That solved that equation but what about everyone else? And what of old Sweetback's reaction?

Me: *Hey Pop remember that offer from Jerry? (No reaction) I think I should take it while the money's still green.*

Melvin: *I thought we agreed that was a little tight.*

Me: *Yeah, yeah, it is but we'd have eighteen days...you shot Sweetback in what 20, 25?*

Pause.

Melvin: *Who's gonna play me?*

Me: *Me.*

Melvin: *And you're gonna direct too?*

Me: *Yeah man just like you did...*

Growing enthusiasm, it's all making karmic sense to me now.

Me: *We'll be doing it in the spirit of the original and we'll even get that same fifty percent minority crew like you had. Remember your question who is the we with creative control gonna be?... Me. The bad news is money's tight; the good news is I can make the movie. No studio interference—good or bad, the vision will be specific.*

Melvin: (Pause.) *Well... Don't make me too fucking nice.*

And that was it. MVP's truncated code for have at it, do as you will, I trust you and won't interfere. And he didn't. He visited the set twice at my request and he saw the film only after my final cut.

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