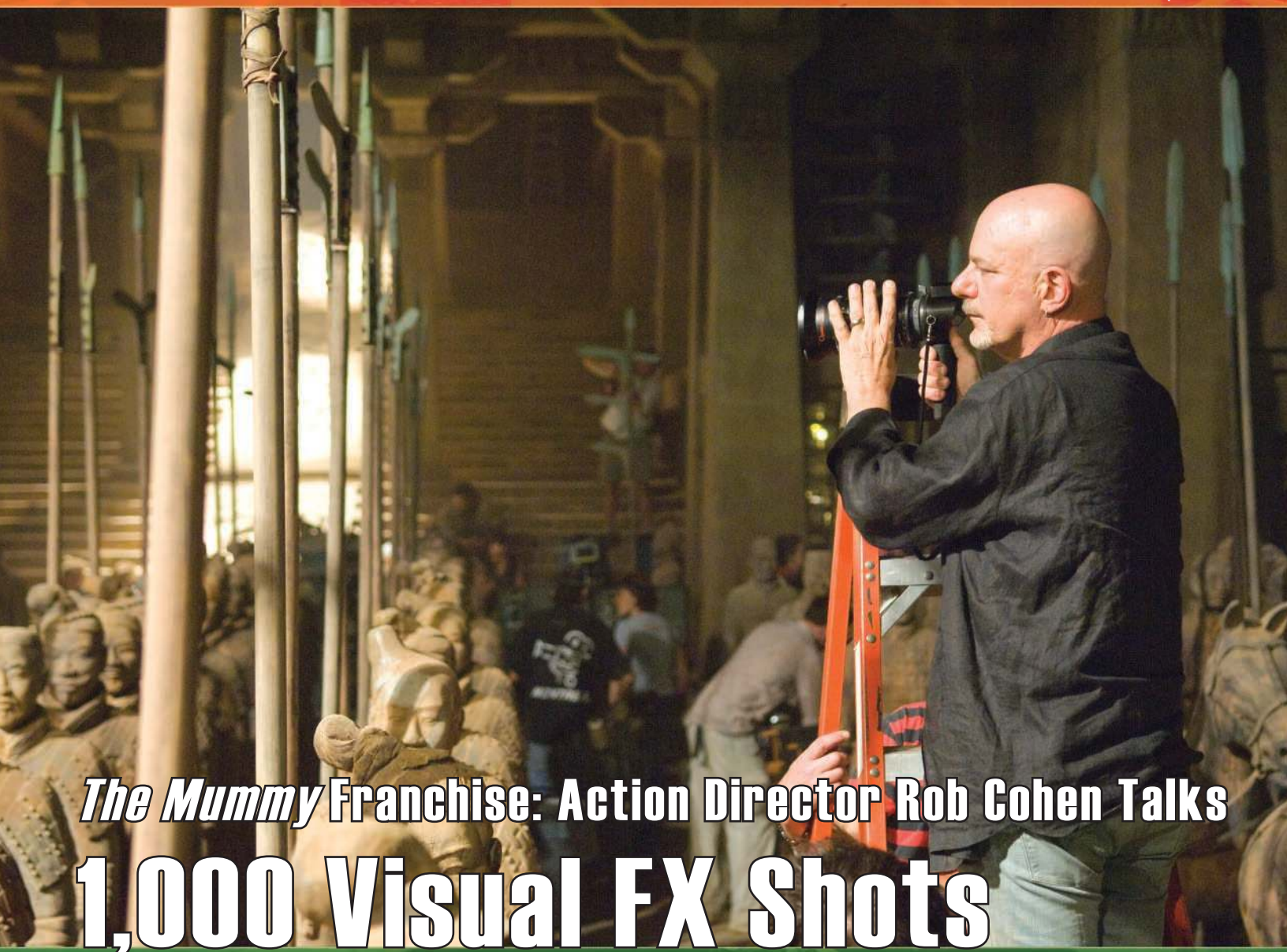
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## *The Mummy* Franchise: Action Director Rob Cohen Talks 1,000 Visual FX Shots

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Director Rob Cohen among the Terracotta Warriors on the set of *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*. Credit: Jasin Boland. Photo courtesy of Universal Studios.



The *StudentFilmmakers* Magazine and StudentFilmmakers.com crew and I deeply thank all of our contributing writers, and all of you who we've worked with over the past years. This includes all of you very talented filmmakers, videographers, cinematographers, editors, producers, and screenwriters who have attended and participated in our workshops, active members of our online forums (studentfilmmakers.com/bb) and network (networking.studentfilmmakers.com), and participants in our annual competitions and festivals.

We thank very much our readers, who have given us great support over the years, as well as feedback to push us moving forward. We deeply thank our very wonderful and supportive advertisers and sponsors for helping us get the magazine to readers' doors. Thank you all very much for your support this past year. Thank you for helping us to deliver, and for being a big part of our growing creative online community and integrated network for filmmakers, videomakers, and crew.

Our Cover Story this edition is an inspiring Q&A with renown action director Rob Cohen. Cohen discusses his directorial approach and work on *The Mummy 3*. Jump to the Editing department in the magazine, and read articles, "Editing XDCAM Footage" and "An Editing Time-Saver."

All of the articles in this edition are excellent.

This month's edition features something very special for the holidays: a *StudentFilmmakers* Magazine Top 5. As filmmakers and storytellers who make and show films, what do you think would make the perfect gift for a filmmaker this holiday season? Need some ideas? Go straight to our special holiday section in this issue featuring *StudentFilmmakers* Magazine's Top 5 Recommended Gifts for Filmmakers. Tell us what you think!

Join me in giving a very warm welcome to five new contributing writers: Jennifer Falk, Jeff Turboff, Rob Kaye, and Torb and Nola Jensen.

Looking ahead into 2009, we look forward to getting more up close and "educational" with you by providing you with various educational workshops and seminars that you request. We look forward to seeing you next year. And, we look forward to the upcoming editions of *StudentFilmmakers* Magazine, **the #1 Educational Resource for Film and Video Makers**.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

Truly,
Kim E. Welch
Publisher / Editor-in-Chief


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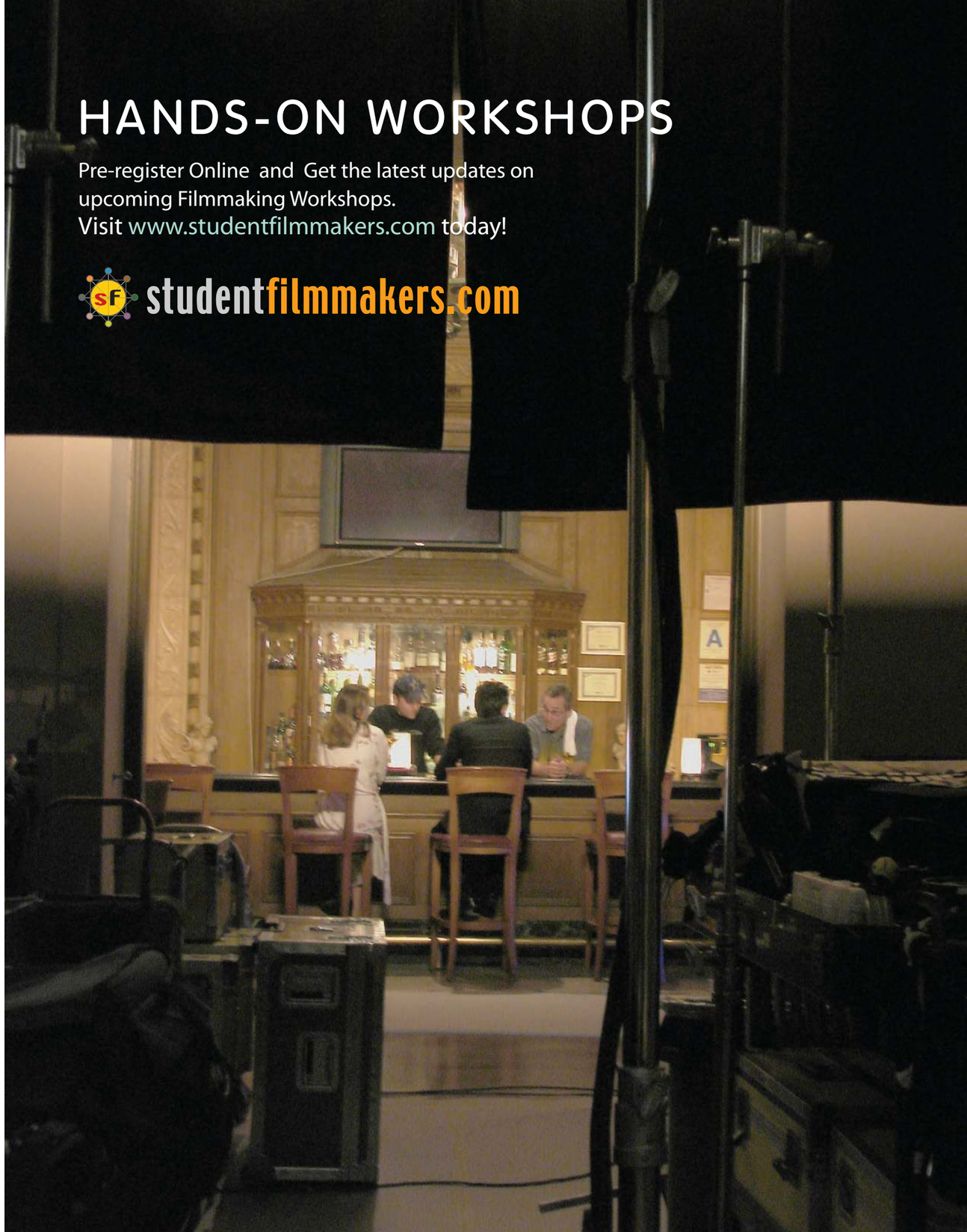
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# Workflow and Weaving the Story: *Ten More Good Years*

## *Includes a Shortlist of Tips for Documentary Editing*

by Jennifer Falk

Ever since I knew I wanted to become an editor, my dream was to work on a documentary project. The idea of searching through hours and hours and hours of footage looking for the best moments that could be linked together to tell a touching and thought-provoking story seemed not only a monumental challenge, but also a rewarding one.

After seven years as a freelance editor, the opportunity presented itself when I met Mike Jacoby, an independent documentary director/producer. Mike showed me a teaser he had edited for his project. It was called, "Ten More Good Years," and it was about the struggle that many LGBT seniors face, growing old and gay in America today. He had been working on the project for over four years, traveling the country interviewing subjects and experts on the topic. He had over a hundred mini-DV tapes that were loaded onto a Final Cut Pro editing system, with all of the tapes logged and transcribed. Looking for an editor with experience, I was recruited for the project.

I couldn't wait to get my hands on the footage. We met in October of 2006. Mike needed to have a finished piece by March 2007. Because of my work schedule, I could only devote weeknights and weekends to the project. So I took his drive, brought it home, and got started.

My first approach was to watch down the tapes and start pulling the sound bytes that I thought would be useful – looking for similar or dissimilar stories, struggles, emotions that could be used. After about a month, I put a dent in the subject matter, but knew that there was no way, at this pace (even working on it full time), we could ever get to the finish line in time. So I expressed my concerns to Mike about meeting his deadline – and we came up with another plan. Since he knew the material, (and had made the transcriptions), 'why don't we sit down and start putting the story together.' This idea was really effective. With each of us being able to use our talents to the fullest: Mike with his knowledge and passion for the subject matter; and myself, efficiency on Final Cut Pro and my storytelling skills.

The film looks at the subject matter as it pertains to the lives of three males and one transgender person. We started the movie introducing each one of these "characters" and some background on their lives – their partners, occupations, being gay in a far less tolerant society than today. These sections were supported or connected together with sound bytes from various experts. Another important section that






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was to be the peak or middle of the film was the 2005 White House Conference on Aging. (A conference making recommendations to the president and Congress to help guide national aging policies). This was important, because what did or didn't happen at the conference would affect the lives of every aging American.

This conference footage created the perfect arc for the final section of the film, integrating our characters with the impact of the conference on their community. We watched it down numerous times – adding new bytes, taking some bytes or smaller sections out, trying to keep focus on what our objective and "motivation" was. This is always the hardest part, since every byte and idea seems so important. But a great lesson I learned was that the viewer never knows and never misses what was left on the "editing room floor".

**Shortlist of Tips for Documentary Editing:**

(1) View all your material.

(2) Create transcripts of tapes. This will be used to create scripts.

(3) Find a beginning, middle, and end for your story.

(4) Be aware of unexpected links while creating your storyline.

(5) Don't be "married to anything". No one will know what's not in the final cut.

(6) Keep your story moving forward.

Once we had a first version of our story, I left Mike to start covering the sound bytes. Once he had that done, he brought me in to give it a polish and make sure our pacing was on track. Of course there were screenings with friends and colleagues to get their opinions. We had a finished piece for Mike's screening, but that was not the end of the project. Over the last year, "Ten More Good Years" was screened in over five film festivals and broadcast on the Sundance and Logo channels. I am extremely proud of the film and of the work that we did. As with most projects, I learned a lot. Most importantly is that each project has it's own approach on what works best for the editor, director and the story they are trying to tell. Our approach though a little unorthodox was very effective.



Director
Mike Jacoby

As both an On-line and Off-line Editor, Jennifer Falk has worked for numerous clients including CBS (Upfront Presentation 2002-2006), ABC, Food Network (The Next Food Network Star 2007), A&E (*"Fathers & Sons in Hollywood"*, a two hour *Biography* special), History (*Deep Sea Detective* series), The Travel Channel, MTV, Comedy Central, Discovery Health (Supervising Editor for the *National Body Challenge 2004* series), ESPN Classic Sports Network, Discovery/Animal Planet, and Sony Music. To learn more about the documentary, *Ten More Good Years*, go to www.10moregoodyears.com. Jennifer's website is www.jennruggedit.com.



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# 1,000 Visual FX Shots, Working with Crew, and *The Mummy* Franchise

## *Renown Action Director Rob Cohen Talks*

by Scott Essman



Former wunderkind producer and executive **Rob Cohen** burst onto the directing scene with his biopic *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* in 1993. Since that time, he has become one of the renowned action directors in Hollywood with films including *Dragonheart, The Fast and the Furious*, and *xXx*. Last year, he undertook his biggest project to date, *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor,* the second sequel in Stephen Sommers' mega-hit from 1999, *The Mummy*, an update of the 1932 Universal classic about the O'Connell family tracking a series of resurrected warriors in the mid-20th century. New to the franchise is Jet Li, who stars as Emperor Han alongside regular Brendan Fraser as Rick O'Connell and his wife Eve, this time played by Maria Bello, and Michelle Yeoh as a fellow adventurer. In this exclusive interview, conducted just days before the film's original August 2008 release date, Cohen waxes on all things Mummy and the machinations of his skyrocketing directing career.

Jet Li and Rob Cohen on the set of *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*. Credit: Frank Masi. Photo courtesy of Universal Studios.



**Regarding *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*, why did you choose to direct a sequel, which I don't think you've done to date?**

**Rob Cohen:** I've never done a sequel to my own movies because there always seems to be new and better ideas out there than to do the same thing you just did. So when they said *Mummy 3*, I went, "What?" And then my agent said, "I just want you to know before you pass on it without reading it, that it all takes place in your favorite country – China. The Terracotta Army of Zi Yuan are the mummies." And the script by Al Gough and Miles Millar was really good and funny. It wasn't quite what I wanted to do, but it was a foundation that we could build on because it had the story and it had the great idea about the Terra Cotta Army. As the mummies and the theme mummy as one of the emperors of China have come back for conquering the world – I just wanted to do, always, since *Dragon,* a movie about China.

**What was your initial idea as to your directorial approach to this film?**

**Rob Cohen:** I always thought that the way to approach China was to do a fantasy. I had been preparing *The Eighth Voyage of Sinbad* at Sony, but when *Stealth* didn't work, they cancelled it. When I read *The Mummy*, I thought all the imagination, the work and research that I'd done on *Sinbad* could be used here and I was very excited. And I met with Stephen and Bob Ducsay and producers Sean Daniel and Jim Jacks and I had a really wonderful meeting with them. I could be very direct; I said what I thought and said, "If you can get with these ideas, I'll do it, and if you can't, then I'm the wrong guy." And they loved the ideas and credit to Stephen as he had a very good sense of detachment, and he was excited about the franchise having a new energy and a new approach. When you see it, it's more a movie of mine than one would suspect because it's the third one in a franchise. It has 1,000 3D visual effects that are mind boggling, and it even has an avalanche sequence. So it has battles and three-headed dragons, and yeti, and chases, and romance, and humor. It's a very detailed, very epic film, having a big fantasy that draws upon a lot of things from Chinese culture that I love.

