

## DAVID MARCONI

### *Enemy Of The State Is Only The Beginning*

By Rita Cook

He cut his teeth watching Francis Ford Coppola direct both *The Outsiders* and *Rumblefish*. "I worked for Coppola as his assistant and it was an incredible experience, kind of like my grad school, and I got to see how he would get performances out of the actors and it gave me a grounding as far as the craft was concerned."

And, as if that weren't enough grounding, on one of David Marconi's most recent writing assignments, *Mission Impossible II*, he was hand picked by director, Oliver Stone to write the screenplay.

He has certainly accomplished a lot for himself in the past 15 years he has been in Los Angeles, making a name for himself as a screenwriter and slowly working toward shifting his career from screenwriting into directing.

Directing for Marconi came about when he was ten years old.

"I got tired of watching my father's home movies go in and out of focus. My father was the originator of shaky-cam."

Marconi decided to take over the camera and make movies with his friends in the neighborhood. "I charged them popcorn money if they wanted to see themselves," he says.

His career continued when he attended film school at USC. It was there that everyone kept asking him, "Where are your scripts?"

Eventually that question led him to become not only a director, but also a now well known and accomplished screenwriter.

Although Marconi directed the low-budget feature film called *Harvest* for Columbia-Tristar, it's his recent screenwriting success that has made the world take notice of him. His recent script, *Enemy of the State* has catapulted him into the realm of writer extraordinaire.

Not that he wasn't noticed before, he has written scripts for Warner Brothers in the past, however most of those scripts are still in development.

Marconi seems to be a workaholic as he explains his work methods.

"I move from deadline to deadline and I have been working constantly for probably six or seven years, so I constantly have some weird deadline or weird pressure hanging over my head and it motivates me to write because there are people waiting on it. Obviously, I take a weekend off here or there, but normally I work."

Of course much of his constant work and continuous deadlines hinge on the thorough research of each subject matter that he tackles as he sits down to write his next script.

"I do a lot of research," Marconi says. "They tell me basically the world they want to work on and then I start diving in and reading stuff about characters and the world that this movie will exist in and I just immerse myself in that. Out of that usually I'll read a story or two that will peak my interest and out of that a story will start to emerge."

With *Enemy of the State* Marconi says he was approached to write the story.

"They basically wanted to work with me and they had seen a movie I had done and they wanted to do a writing/directing deal and we just took the writing deal because at the end of the day the idea that I would be directing it didn't work. I wrote a very expensive movie so obviously they weren't going to let me direct. The initial idea was they [the producers] wanted to do a kind of modern day version of a man with an electronic identity who was on the run."

The research and writing of *Enemy of the State* took Marconi three years.

"It was the development process, writing and rewriting – draft after draft and the research of the National Security Council, which is an agency that doesn't really want to be researched so there's very little information published on them. It is very difficult to find anything that even mentions who these people are even though they are bigger than the CIA and the FBI put together," Marconi says.

At the end of the day, Marconi is proud of what he accomplished with *Enemy of the State*.

"Most Americans when you tell them this stuff they look at you with these deer eyes and wonder how it is possible. I just hope I flipped over some rocks and exposed some of these issues whether or not people choose to believe it or whatever. I just hope I have exposed it and this is what's going on. Whether or not you want to believe it is up to you, but it is all documented."

Marconi's eyes light up when he talks about the message of *Enemy of the State*.

"The underlying message," he explains, "is the issues of privacy and where we, as a society, are going and what we are becoming. The surveillance society is not something that we need to avoid in the future; it is very much alive here today. We are being watched and that's what I wanted to communicate. As long as it is not apparent and in our face we as a society are o.k. with it, but the reality is that everything we are doing is being looked at and inspected."

Although Marconi is ready to sink his teeth into directing a film, he continues to be hired to write action films, which he feels is his strength. He is currently working on a screenplay called, "WW3.com" for Twentieth-Century Fox.

"I enjoy the process," he says. "It's a constant progression. There are a lot of movies I want to do, a lot of stories I want to tell. I don't think I can ever sit back and say I've done it."

His grounded view of the world comes from growing up in the Midwest, Marconi explains.

"I grew up in Chicago and Chicago kind of gives you a basis of the every man voice for America. I found there was a certain amount of grounding that came out of growing up there. Actually, wherever you're from gives you a certain world outlook and being from the Midwest you think you really come from middle America."

Wherever his grounding came from, Marconi is definitely a talented and skilled writer with an understanding of the process.

"It's a painful process," he admits. "It's just a struggle, I'd much prefer directing. Writing is all self-motivated. When you complete a script you feel great for about a day until you get the notes. When you get the re-write notes it's like all this great stuff you thought you did is suddenly reduced down to zero again."

Regardless of the re-writes, Marconi has certainly found the way to reach his future aspirations of directing by excelling as a screenwriter.

His point of view on the whole process isn't so bad either. On life, he says, "Life is to live, life is an experience that you need to grab and live to the fullest. It is something you need to grab and dance with. In order to have stories to tell you need to live life. On the industry? "Well, the industry you can't be concerned with," Marconi notes. "You have to know what the industry is about, you have to know what sells and once you know that, you have to know what they are looking for. Once you have that information you can go out and try to pick the stories that you want to tell with the idea that eventually the industry might be interested in buying it."

Marconi is inspired, he says, by "people that rise to occasions where they need to become better than they once were."

Could his next goal in life, directing, be his own call to rise to the occasion and become better?

"I want to be remembered for making films that were about something, films that had something to say." Down the road, it is inevitable that Marconi will have a lot to say both writing and directing in Hollywood. "I've pretty much always known what it is I have wanted to do," he says. Now it's just a matter of the world sitting back and watching him do it.

Rita Cook is a producer, writer and currently President of Cinewomen Los Angeles. She was an associate producer on Trimark's *Route 666* and co-producer on three films *Schizophrenic*, *Gabriella* and *Lost Soul*. Editor-in-Chief of *Insider Magazine* and Staff Writer for SCREENTALK, Cook will be producing a horror film in November, *The Kiss Of The Vampire*, of which she is also co-writer.

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