

Richard Arsenault

Filmmaking Biography

Richard Joseph Arsenault began making films in 1975 in a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. From his early claymation, pixilation, and live action work, Richard has been combining storytelling with technology for over thirty five years.

His early animation featured clay dinosaurs and his first special effects employed custom built space ships and a primitive optical printer by way of a "back winder." Using super-8, Richard painstakingly created multiple exposure layers including star fields, explosions, and animated laser beams. Then, Richard blended live actors with animation and effects to create his first short film, Pickilation. Titled aptly, the short film gave Richard the chance to explore the technique of pixilation while telling a simple three part story with a protagonist and antagonist.

At fifteen, Richard created the first film club at his high school, which soon expanded to fifty members and a full orchestra. Under Richard's direction, the club created three live action sync-sound super-8 films from 1980 to 1982 from 25 to 60 minutes in length. Richard directed and edited the comedy Dragon Quest (1980), an homage to Monty Python about two brothers seeking to kill a paper machete dragon for fame and glory.

Richard next directed and edited the comedy The Maltese Hamster (1981), a spoof on James Bond. Lance Flintlock tries to solve the mystery of the International Gag Terrorists with a clue tattooed on the hamster. King's Bane (1982) is a dramatic one-hour medieval 'epic' with a cast of students featuring authentic costumes, horses, elaborate locations across Pittsburgh, and a full student orchestral score. King's Bane is a story about a son avenging the death of his father. These high school productions demonstrated passion, storytelling, production value, and the innovative use of technology that would remain present in each of Richard's upcoming films.

On to college, Richard began studying film at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut. He then transferred to the University of Southern California in Los Angeles where Richard studied directing and editing under faculty that included Edward Dymtryk, and guests such as Oliver Stone and Bob Gale. Richard earned a Bachelor of Arts in Cinema/Television Production.

In 1986, Richard's senior USC film was a high school rock musical entitled SPATS. The story focused on a geeky marching band trying to fit into modern cliques - a struggle Richard still can identify with. The 16mm sync sound musical was written and directed by Richard. He teamed up with professional musicians and music producers from the Arsenio Hall Show, along with a professional choreographer to create a film that looks a lot like an 80's version of High School Musical and Glee.

After USC, Richard worked as a video technician and video editor on numerous notable feature films and television shows including Die Hard, Beverly Hills Cop II, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Wizard, and

pilots like The Wonder Years. Richard also worked on a handful of commercials and high end music videos with stars from Ozzie Osborne to Cab Calloway (for the latter, he had honor of producing and edited one of Mr. Calloway's final performances).

Richard directed and edited a diverse list of projects in the late 1980's. He created a series of three short films that were put on permanent display at the Los Angeles Children's Zoo. Without dialogue, and only music and fast-motion, the challenge of these 16mm films was to take viewers from beginning to completion of ice cream, cottage cheese, and wool production. They were each mastered to Laser Disc and told a story forwards OR in reverse, controlled by a large wheel on the physical kiosk.

Richard next worked with a variety of corporations on high budget projects from Mitsubishi Corporation to American Airlines. He was part of a small team that revolutionized the use of video to train international workforces. For Taco Bell Corporation, Richard served as producer and writer on the groundbreaking high budget feature length training film that included night for night, steady-cam, full crew, and an amateur cast of real employees from across the country, all setting a new bar of excellence in that genre.

Richard then worked with celebrities, musicians, and comedians, creating demo reels and videotaping show reels for Matthew Perry, Heather Locklear, Victoria Principal, Danny Gans, Rick Rossovich, Vince Gill, Pauly Shore, The Righteous Brothers, Crosby Stills and Nash, and many others. Richard has interviewed Sir Elton John, John Lithgow, Dana Delaney, Robert Picardo, Christian Slater and Bruce Willis.

In 1990, Richard met with a large educational distributor who ordered over 120 half-hour educational films for international distribution. That set a new level of challenge which required Richard to re-invent his already efficient production methods. The order expanded to create over 450 educational films in five years. The database technology Richard invented was an early prototype that would later be integral to non-linear editing. These educational films cover a wide range of titles from Sociology to History. For technology help, Richard turned to Brad Carvey (brother of comedian Dana Carvey) inventor of the revolutionary *Video Toaster*. The *Toaster* and Amiga Computer platform facilitated the high graphic demands and 3-D animation these tape-based titles demanded.

Richard's skills as editor grew to facilitate the speed and flexibility these documentary, reality, and educational titles demanded. As Richard finished the successful "Real Life Teens" franchise he created, his demand in mainstream television as an AVID and Final Cut editor was growing. In addition, Richard developed a long lasting relationship with Final Cut Pro's suite, Adobe suite, web developing and publishing technologies, and new ways to utilize and deliver media on disc - from Laser Disc to VideoCD interactive, to DVD, to DVD interactive. From the beginning, Richard saw random access delivery as a new distribution and communication venue for storytellers.

In the early 90's Richard met his mentor Irvin Kershner (The Empire Strikes Back) while interviewing Kersh on a documentary Richard was producing about SeaQuest's use of the *Video Toaster*. Kersh and Richard would be friends until beloved filmmaker's passing November of 2010.

First hired as a freelance editor for Warner Brothers, then as a staff editor for E! Entertainment, Richard brought his techniques for storytelling and re-enactments to an increasing audience. Richard's work on "True Hollywood Stories" is referenced by others to this day. His television credits span almost every network, from MTV, Vh1, and Nickelodeon, to CBS, NBC and FOX, to Discovery Networks, Travel Channel, WB, FX, Oxygen, Style. Richard specialized in show fixing, story fixing, creating new styles, and creating new and original work with increasingly popular editing techniques.

Over the last decade, Richard has notably contributed to some of the most popular shows on primetime and daytime major network television. Richard was Ellen DeGeneres' sole package editor during seasons 1 and into season 2, where he created the look and feel of the "real world" show packages. He created many popular comedy pieces with greats like Will Ferrell. During a two-year stay at American Idol, Richard was promoted to editor for contestant Fantasia, following Ms. Barrino through her victory.

He has worked in practically every genre and demand-category of editing. From intense "day of air" editing at "EXTRA" and "Access Hollywood," he developed amazing speed, precision, and quality control. For Travel Channel, Discovery Networks, and HBO, he developed a luxurious, rich storytelling style that ranged from suspense to drama to comedy. For TLC and FOX, Richard brought his re-enactment editing to new level for docu-dramas, reality, and documentaries. And for MTV networks, Richard "re-invented" popular music editing, style and pace (according to the network). Richard has frequently returned to narrative story telling and recently edited a narrative feature.

While editing as a freelancer for such greats at Tyler Perry and Nigel Lithgow, he has worked alongside many celebrities.

Richard also has produced a groundbreaking nine-part scientific series on a complex scientific issue that was previously confused. To accommodate the hours of information and varied interest needs on the DVD, Richard invented *CustomPlay* Technology which allows the user to interactively decide what they should watch, and incorporates multi-media on a standard DVD player.

Most recently, Richard is continuing to develop non-linear dynamic media both on DVD platforms as well as streaming over the internet. Richard sees combining technology, non-linear delivery, remote delivery, live performance and rendering, and sophisticated data-basing of media as an inevitable and exciting storytelling evolution for the new generation of film and media makers.

Richard's employment has ranged from most of the major television networks to NASA. His style ranges from comedy to intense suspense. And his genres have spanned from narrative to scientific documentary.