

Panel 2 – Interviews with Eileen Dietz and Alexandre O. Philippe

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Horror Reverie 2:
An Online Symposium Celebrating 50 Years of *The Exorcist*

TRANSCRIPT

Panel 2 – Interviews with Eileen Dietz and Alexandre O. Philippe

11 March 2023

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Kristopher (Kris) Woofert

Thanks, Stacey. Thanks to all the panelists for the first round. And we're gonna go ahead and roll right into panel two, there's a break between two and three so you can leave your screen then, or any time since you're not on camera. I'll introduce Anna Bogutskaya who will be having a discussion with Eileen Dietz and filmmaker Alexandre Philippe.

Oh, hi. Hi, Eileen!

Anna Bogutskaya

Thank you so much, Kris. I'm gonna start right away. First of all, thank you so much, Stacey, for asking me to moderate this panel. I'm a big fan of *The Exorcist*. I'm really, really excited to talk to the both of you about the film and your different experiences with it. So as an introduction, I'm Anna Bogutskaya. I'm the host of The Final Girls podcast and a writer, and film critic, and I'll be your moderator for this session. I'm going to be starting off by asking our special guests Eileen and Alexandre about their relationship with *The Exorcist* before handing it over to the audience for any questions, and, you know, put them in the chat. I'll try to get through as many of them as possible towards the tail end

of the session. So to begin, Eileen, I wanted to start with you and ask you about your relationship with horror before making *The Exorcist*.

56:26 (Approx. 2 minutes in)

Eileen Dietz

Well, I guess there were a couple of things. My mother did take me to see Swedish films, like Ingmar Bergmann films, and they weren't horror, but they were definitely thrillers. We can go into that later. But I am of the opinion that there is a huge difference between horror today, and what they call a thriller. So anyway, I saw many of those films, so when I got to meet Max, and he was like, Oh, my God. And then I just happened to see the original *Psycho*, of course, which totally freaked me out. And I saw a film with Susan Strasberg called *Scream of Fear* that I still remember. So, I just liked doing horror films, I mean, watching horror films, and then *The Exorcist* came along and the rest of it is history. I only shoot horror films.

Anna Bogutskaya

And I'll definitely be asking you more about the actual experience of making the film and what that meant for you afterwards. But Alexandre, to continue, what is your relationship with the film as a viewer?

Alexandre Philippe

Well, first of all, I want to say thank you for having me. It's a real honor and a pleasure to be to be here with you both today. I actually have a bit of a different relationship with *The Exorcist*. I grew up in Switzerland as a massive horror fan when I was very much a kid, I was watching all the horror films I could find. But there were two films that I actually waited a long time to watch. The first one is *The Exorcist*, the other is *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. The reason I waited so long for *The Exorcist* was because my mom had actually told me how traumatized she had been by the experience. She went to watch the film with with my dad when it came out in theaters, and she was up for a week, she literally couldn't sleep, she had to leave the lights on. And, you know, as much as I was sort of craving the experience of watching horror films as a kid, I was just too

afraid to actually confront it and to go through the experience. And so, I think I watched it in my 20s or something, I don't have an exact sort of recollection of it, and it didn't scare me as much as I initially thought. But, you know, it's one of those films that I got to appreciate over time. And I think that the process that I went through, in the making of leap of faith and obviously working with William so closely and to get to pick his brain for such a long period of time, really changed things for me in a very profound way. I mean, to prepare for what turned out to be six days of interviews with him on the film, I took *The Exorcist* with me. I went to this beautiful little vineyard in Sebastopol, California, and I had to sort of build a routine that would counterbalance the intensity of the film. So, I had this desk with a beautiful view on a vineyard, I woke up at 5:30 in the morning, drove by the Potter School where of course, Hitchcock shot the iconic scene from *The Birds*, went on a long beach walk, got my latte, got home, and watched *The Exorcist*. I did that every day for 30 days. It's this sort of sense that you have to decant the film in a way, and everyday new things started coming. And now, of course, after going through this for 30 days, there's no question in my mind that it's an absolute masterpiece of cinema.

Anna Bogutskaya

I think we can all agree on that. Eileen, to come back to you and to the actual making of *The Exorcist*--I'm wondering, I always want to know about the actual shooting of a film that becomes so influential and so huge. Why do they consider it to be a masterpiece? Can you tell us a little bit of what the actual experience of filming was like?

Eileen Dietz

Well, of course none of us knew *The Exorcist* was going to become /*The Exorcist*/. That was my first big studio film. I had shot some things on what they call PBS, which is a couple of driving movies and stuff like that. So this was my first big studio film, and as I mentioned, I had seen Max von Sydow on film, so that that first day was like, a little kid in a candy store. Like, wow, look what's going on here! But I guess everybody really has to understand that when you're on the other side of the camera, it's not scary, because some of it was arduous. I think most people know that, besides playing the demon Pazuzu which, of

course is the highlight and has become the icon of the entire film, which is really exciting to me. I was also what I like to call the demon the possesses Regan. And that's when I was made up to look exactly like her actually. And some of that was arduous, because I got to do what they call the most terrifying shots in the film, which was most of the levitation. We both did that, but the vomiting scene, and the masturbation scene, and the death scene at the end. So, I did all that kind of stuff. And it was fun, particularly the vomiting scene was a little rough. Dick Smith, of course, the genius of this film, and you want to put right up on top what made this film so thrilling, you got to put Deke Smith right in number one, because I am going to digress a minute. But instead of making a demon like this demon thing, you know, with red eyes, and horns and stuff like that, which we did on makeup tests, what he chose to do, as you all saw, was scratches and things like that, which made Regan so identifiable to the audience. And, you know, I like to say that, that was the fantastic part of *The Exorcist*, because you need people in films, I believe, horror and everything else, that you need to identify with the characters that you're watching, and either hate them or love them. But you do have to have a feeling about them to make the film work. With *The Exorcist*, all the parents that watch it, religious or not, thought that this could happen to their kid, you know, which was the beauty of the hand on the doorknob. That could be my kid that turns into the demon! And all the children that saw it, and some of them were five years old that I met at conventions. They were afraid they were going to turn into this demon and the beauty of that was, like I said, because you could identify with this child that just had worse and worse scratches on her face. So, making the film was you know, it was a three-and-a-half-hour make up. And what they did is they situated a TV so that they you see them in the mirror. And so you can watch TV while the makeup was going on. And Linda wanted to watch *I Love Lucy* at six in the morning. I wanted to watch the news, but she didn't like that. Also taking off the makeup when you just wanted to go home, that was an hour and a half process, because they had to take each little prosthetic off, which I wish I'd kept. But you know, piece by piece. So, a lot of times I got there and they put all the makeup on, and I did shoot, because that's, that's what movie making is like. But they paid me to be there. Oh, I got there at 630 in the morning, but they never use me all day. So what! you got paid.

Anna Bogutskaya

And I mean, you mentioned it at the start that, you know, Pazuzu has become one of the many scary images and one of the iconic images of the film. When did you start noticing how, how iconic it had become?

Eileen Dietz

Actually, believe it or not, it's been in the last five or six years, you know, that suddenly Pazuzu is appearing on the record. I don't know, I think Warner Brothers suddenly embraced this whole thing or knew what was going on. And so the face of Pazuzu is now on the record album that came out. And now they're advertising and things like that. So, I mean, I'm, I'm stunned by it, and very happy about it. But they have made Pazuzu based on *The Exorcist*. So yeah. But all our lives, as actors, or anybody really has been made different by the advent of social media.

1:06:57 (Approx. 10 minutes in)

Anna Bogutskaya

Oh, absolutely. And I'll touch on that a little bit later. But Alexandre wanted to move on to you and ask you, you know about your perception of the film, obviously, it comes from a different angle. So, what do you think about the cultural position of *The Exorcist*? You know, do you think it's considered a work of art? Do you think it's consideration as a piece of art is impacted by it being a horror film?

Alexandre Philippe

Well, to continue my thought earlier, you know, as I said, it is an essential masterpiece of cinema, you know. But I think the thing for me is that it is, and I think we can absolutely make the argument that it is a masterpiece, because it is a horror film, not in spite of the fact that it is a horror film. And I think that's a really important sort of distinction to make. And, you know, I think, many of the films that I make are about horror films. I mean, I've made a film about *Psycho*, about *Alien*, about *The Exorcist*. I mean, if someone's zombies, you know, there's more stuff coming up in the future as well. But I think, for me,

what is so important about horror movies is their social function, in a sense of sort of rites of passage, and I compare them often to, you know, there's sort of the modern equivalent to fairy tales hundreds of years ago that were, you know, before they started getting really sort of diluted or Disney-fied, is this idea that you have to sort of go through that story, and you're gonna come out a different person, it is a kind of a sort of coming of age. But for me, what I think makes horror films or horror cinema or horror stories generally so important is this idea that it deals with an extraordinarily important emotion, which is fear. And, you know, I think that fear is the gateway to self-knowledge. And let me explain what I mean by this, right? So, fear, if you think about it on a micro and macro level, largely dictates what we will or won't do, and therefore what we end up doing or not doing. So, fear, you could absolutely say regulates our lives every single day. And I think this idea of this ritual, if you will, the ritual of storytelling of going through a book or going through, you know, a horror movie experience, and looking into the dark mirror and facing those fears, is an extraordinary way to confront the inner demons to start having or gaining perhaps a better understanding about what we're afraid of and why we're afraid of it, to start having this sort of conversation with ourselves. So, on that level alone, I would say *The Exorcist* is a masterpiece because it is a horror film. But I would then add the other layer of it, which is what makes *The Exorcist* even greater than is the fact that at its core, it is a story about love. It's a heartbreaking story of, you know, four characters, I mean, structurally, and actually I tried to have that conversation with Friedkin and he disagrees with me on this. But I think structurally what's so really fascinating to me about the story is that it's not a protagonist driven piece. It is not an ensemble piece, but you have four characters at the center of it. Yeah, you can absolutely make the argument that Regan is the protagonist in the sense that she triggers the action of the story. But it is just as much a story about Father Merrin and Chris and Father Karras as it is about the possession. So that particular kind of narrative is quite unique. I mean, I can't think really of, of a, of a book or a story that is not an ensemble piece that has these sort of four distinct perspectives. And that makes you feel what is happening on such a profound level. So, you know, that's just kind of scratching the surface. I think there's so many other reasons for the greatness of it.

Anna Bogutskaya

Yeah, absolutely. And we could be here all day just talking about why all the things that make a great film, but you mentioned briefly your film *Leap of Faith*, which focuses very much on William Friedkin and his artistic process. I've seen your previous films made about other horror films and the different approaches for each one. What made you decide to focus the one you made on *The Exorcist* on Friedkin as an artist, and about that process of making the film, and all the choices that went into it? And the way, you know, for anyone who has not seen *Leap of Faith*, it is structured very much as a long conversation with Friedkin from going into the creative decisions, or artistic influences and kind of magical occurrences that happened for some of the things that have made this is such an iconic film and a horror masterpiece. So, a long-winded way of asking you what led you to giving *Leap of Faith* that structure to focus it entirely and Friedkin?

Alexandre Philippe

The whole thing was actually a magical occurrence. And it's actually kind of ironic that *The Exorcist* as Friedkin describes it is about the mysteries of faith. Because I was not at all planning on making a film on *The Exorcist*, that was not at all my intent. I was at the Sundance Film Festival for the Spanish premiere of *78/52*, the film that I made on the cycle shower scene. And I it was just one of those things where I was having lunch with Gary Sherman. And we picked one of you know, 40 restaurants that we could have picked to go on the port. We started having lunch, and then about halfway through lunch, a voice behind me calls Alex and turn around and it's Friedkin! I was just like, "what's happening." He called me to stay and he said, "Yeah, I've heard so much about your film and I want to tell you some stories about Hitch." So we talked about Hitchcock for a while, and he took my phone and gave me his email address, and said please send me your film right away. So I send them the film, and two hours later, I get this sort of gushing email about *78/52*. And he says, next time you're in LA, I want to buy you lunch. Great. And, you know, I mean, at the time, I was actually thinking, great, this is an opportunity for me to interview him for

Memory, which is the film that I made on Ridley Scott's *Alien*, which was in production at the time. So I thought, perfect, this is what's going to happen. So three weeks later, I'm in LA, and we're having lunch. I tried to talk to him about alien, but he moved the conversation towards *The Exorcist*. And he basically said, at one point, he said, you know, sort of telling you about his archives, and he said, if you wanted to have access to all this, you know, my archives and everything that I've got, I give you access. I sort of had this double take and asked, "what do you mean," and he said, well, you know, read my autobiography and think about it, and if you find an angle, just let me know. So for me, what sort of immediately came to mind because I mean, I'm also very intuitive in sort of the way that I structure my films, and it comes to me very quickly. But much has been said, and written, and many documentaries that have been made about the making of the film. So I didn't want to get into, you know, the makeup or techniques or any of that, that sort of, you know, the making of the film. I was really interested in picking his brain about how he conceived and worked on the expresses through art, through music, through classical cinema, through philosophy, and the way he sort of views the world. And so basically, I told him, I said, Look, I'd like to do something similar to you know, the using sort of *Hitchcock/Truffaut* as a model, where, you know, we would have a series of interviews over a number of days, but instead of going chronologically, through your entire filmography, I just want to focus on *The Exorcist*. And I want to crack open every scene every shot every technique every moment. And he responded very positively to that. He said, "how many days do you need?" So we started with three, and then it became four and became five became six. So the first day and a half, we literally just focused on the prologue and interacted. So, I mean, that's how granular we, you know, we got with this. And, for me, it was certainly a transformational sort of experience as a cinephile and a massive geek to be able to do this deep dive with him.

1:16:48 (Approx. 20 minutes in)

Anna Bogutskaya

And can I ask you, how did that process of doing this six-day long interview and *Leap of Faith* go? How did that change your view of the film itself and of him as a filmmaker?

Alexandre Philippe

Oh, I mean, completely. There's a lot to unpack, but as I said, first of all, there was this sort of 30 days of watching *The Exorcist* every day, which transformed my life. And I think that's true, you know, of every great film. I think movie watching is movie rewatching and the more you rewatch a great film, the more you're going to find stuff. But secondly, to be able to do this sort of deep dive with Friedkin, specifically through the lens of art and music and classic cinema, was really mind opening, to talk about certain shots or certain moments, to talk about some of his influences, I think was really profound. But to me the moment that really makes my film was on day four of our interviews. We, we were sort of taking a 10-minute break, and then he just out of the blue, he says "have I told you about the Kyoto zen gardens?" And I said no. So he said okay, roll. So we're rolling cameras and he launches into this extraordinarily profound and moving monologue about his experience from you know, 30 years ago of going to the theaters and gardens and being so moved by it. I mean, to the point where he started tearing up, which, you know, I had certainly never seen. And it was such an extraordinary sort of moment that I thought, first of all, on the spot, I realized, okay, this is the way I have to end the film. Secondly, you know, I have to find a way to go to Kyoto, we had not budgeted Kyoto, but we had to go to Kyoto. There was just there was no way around it. And I'm really glad we did. And so, so for me without sort of giving it away, I'm hoping, you know, people who haven't seen *Leap of Faith* will go and watch it. It's on Shutter and Amazon. I think that scene is a new way to look at not just *The Exorcist*, but its filmography and the way that the film starts is really about what I call Friedkin's "sacred stones." There are *The Exorcist* stones, there are the stones from the Kyoto zen garden, and the obelisk from Kubrick's *2001*. And I think understanding the personal meaning of those stones for Friedkin is a way you can start filtering *The Exorcist* and some of these other films through and get a very different take on his work.

Anna Bogutskaya

Like a skeleton key for understanding his work on a deeper level.

Alexandre Philippe

That's the way I see it, yeah.

Anna Bogutskaya

And Eileen, you mentioned that aside from playing Pazuzu, you were also doubling for possessed Regan, especially for some of the more gruesome scenes. And I wanted to ask you, if you could talk a little bit about that work and sharing that role with Linda Blair. What was that like for you?

Eileen Dietz

Well she was 12, and 12 years old in 1973 is very different than 12 year olds today. Matter of fact, I think that if you cast a 12-year-old today, she probably would have done all those demonic scenes. But her mom used to chase me, you know, "What's Eileen doing?" But Linda and I were friends at the time, we're not anymore. And as far as doing those scenes, you know, it was part of my contract. I love to work, so every day was a new adventure. You know, like, I can't wait to see what's gonna happen today, and especially shooting the Pazuzu scenes, which was actually the very last day of shooting just one of the mysteries of life, that they decided to do this makeup test. And we actually shot the very last day when I was supposed to shoot a commercial at the same time. So that was really cool.

Anna Bogutskaya

And I did want to ask you kind of do you remember your reaction when you saw the finished thing for the first time?

Eileen Dietz

We saw it in a big movie theater in New York City, which is where we shot and people weren't overwhelmed at the time. Really, one of the scariest scenes is when Ellen Burstyn went up to the attic. And the shock value of it. I mean, everybody loved it with the sound, but a lot of what happened with that film happened after, like I said, none of us knew that *The Exorcist* was going to become *The Exorcist*. Although they did a lot of things that really hadn't been done before. the set was totally closed to the press. So nobody knew what was

going on. And when they opened the film, they wouldn't let people in during the show, so they really built it up. I mean, the PR on this film is amazing. And we weren't allowed to take anything out of the film. We couldn't take pictures, it was all totally NDA. I actually snuck some away, I don't know how. So some of it was arduous, the vomiting scenes were probably the most difficult to do. They put a thing in my mouth that had little holes on it and then they actually pumped the green soup through tubes that they hid under the makeup and then down my back. So it was arduous because you couldn't talk that much, and I liked to talk, and then you couldn't smoke. And obviously you couldn't eat. So yeah, that was a little difficult but it was fun. Everything that I did. I thought was great fun. And I do have another story, when Ellen Burstyn and the doctor come barging into the room and first see the demon for the first time, they decided that it would be scary for the actors if they concocted this mix of raw meat and raw eggs and stuff like that for this incredible smell. And so when they first brought it out, it felt like everybody reacted to it. By the third track we just got sick.

Anna Bogutskaya

And, Alexander, you wanted to comment?

Alexandre Philippe

Yeah, I just had a quick question for Eileen, because I'm very interested in, you know, you were talking about the audience reactions at the time, Eileen, I would love to know, because like *The Exorcist*, and those sort of rare movies that become so visceral for an audience again, like *Psycho* or *Alien* for me, I'm very curious, because I did not get to live them in the theater when they came out. I would love to know, how did that manifest itself in the audience? Were people very vocal? Were there a lot of screams? Were people getting nauseous? What was your sense of the audience pulse within the theater when the film came out 50 years ago now.

1:26:45 (Approx. 30 minutes in)

Eileen Dietz

I only saw it with an audience once at the premiere screening. So I saw it with the whole cast and crew. And it's an interesting question, because I've never seen it with an audience. I've seen it at home, of course. A slightly different audience, other than cast and crew, which is totally different.

Anna Bogutskaya

And a slightly different spin actually on Alexander's question is, you know, you mentioned social media, and how that changed a lot for actors and for fans as well. When did you start noticing from the audience that *The Exorcist* became */The Exorcist/*?

Eileen Dietz

That's a good question. I mean, like I said, on social media it's easy, you know, I have 5000 friends on Facebook and stuff like that. And everybody came on and talked about how incredibly exciting or scary the film was. And then when I started doing conventions in 2000, and of course, conventions, that was the other way that we knew what was happening with the film. And they really only started 10 or 15 years later, so then you get a total impression about how people felt. You get one question, like all the time, which is, "do you know that film changed my life?" Yeah, I'm kind of aware. I mean, you kind of want to say that. But you know, the fans are so great. And they're so exciting. And I've been in the UK a couple of times doing conventions, which are kind of great that I got to go over there. I think I've been there like six times. But that's really where you get the audience reaction. Now, people are just, you know, mesmerized by this. And a lot of the fans, they wanted to catch the image of Pazuzu. And in the original film, there's only one shot. People left the theater and they went, "did you see it? Did you see that face?" So the people that had VCRs at the time tried to capture the image and they couldn't do and then they got DVDs and all of a sudden they did stop motion and caught the image. So an answer to your question, that's really the way that we recognized how scared the film was. And also a Korean Magazine ran and put my face on the cover. And then books came out. And that's when I became aware of it.

Anna Bogutskaya

And Alexandre, it's really interesting watching *Leap of Faith* and thinking about *The Exorcist*, not just as a horror masterwork. But as a film that contains a lot of what Friedkin calls the grace notes, these little moments that perhaps don't have that much to do with the plot of the film, but kind of give insight into something more profound than what the film is about. And I was wondering, what do you think are some of *The Exorcist's* grace notes?

Alexandre Philippe

So, in the end, we're talking about the grace notes. He refers to *Citizen Kane*, there's obviously a lot in relationship to this, but he talks very specifically about that little moment when Chris walks, and you see the fall leaves and you see those two nuns and she notices them wearing the Halloween masks, it's these very contained, very small moments. And it's not necessarily the kind of moment that you think about when you think about *The Exorcist*, but it's the grace notes. You know, he talks also about this extraordinary moment, when, in the opening prologue, Father Merrin is walking through this market, and there were these this extraordinary shafts of sunlight piercing through the tents that he had noticed, and he felt that we had to shoot. And so that became a grace note and I think there's many more, but I think that's part of the beauty of *The Exorcist*. We've talked about the horror of *The Exorcist*, but I think every great horror film has not just beauty, but poetry. I mean, there is a sort of a poetry to horror. And I think it's really important to the design of a film like this, to give us those moments, the way that *The Exorcist* sort of builds? Also, you have the sort of tender moments between the mother and the daughter, which are extremely important. And that goes back to what I was trying to say earlier. Is that, beyond the poetry, this is a film about love. It's a film about grief, it's a film about guilt. It's a profoundly human movie, and it is a movie that is driven by complex characters. I mean, if you were to only focus on the arc of Father Karras alone and the guilt that he feels towards his mother, it's absolutely heartbreaking. The sacrifice that he makes for a little girl that he never gets to really meet. I mean, he only meets Regan as Pazuzu. He never gets to meet Regan as Regan, and yet he commits. What an extraordinary moment that is. You can talk about Chris and what she goes through as a mother, you know, that moment when she meets up with Karras in the park and she is utterly not

just heartbroken, but in complete despair. She doesn't know what to do. I mean, who can't relate to this, right? I'm not a parent, but I'm sure every parent can relate to this. And, in fact, every son or every daughter can relate to what Father Karras is going through with their parents. I left Europe to go to the United States and, you know, my parents were very happy about that. But my mom still lives in France, and I know how difficult it was then for her to let me go. So those are the sort of profoundly human emotions that we all feel. And I think it's one of the reasons why *The Exorcist* is such a masterpiece and why it's unforgettable. Because it moves us all.

Eileen Dietz

Yeah. And we talk about building Friedkin all the time, but there would have been no *The Exorcist* since without the screenplay. So we really need to give kudos to Peter Blatty. We became really close up before he passed a few years ago. The book is amazing. It's amazing. And the book concentrates a lot more on when they really separated the film, in my opinion, into the spiritual, the medical and the horror. In the book, you really don't know whether she really has been possessed by a demon, or if she's having huge medical problems. She needs a therapist, but you really don't know. So many people from *The Exorcist* have passed now, and I miss my correspondence with Bladdy. He wrote me a note and he said, I don't know if I said this before, but my favorite scenes in *The Exorcist* were the ones you did. And I just went, wow, you know, that was one of the best compliments I've ever had in my entire life. So you guys should also see the book or read my book. And I wrote a book called *Exorcising my Demons*. And the first part is how I became an actor, a little flat chested buck-toothed girl from New York that everybody laughed at, because I really came out of the era where we had Twiggy and people like that. But there were a lot of people like Brigitte Bardot and Jane Russell that were really big and busty, and they said "you can't be an actress, you're too little!" So I talk all about *The Exorcist* from somebody who was part of it. And I tried to find the funny parts as well, because a lot of people know about the hard things. So in my book, I tried to find things that kind of also made me laugh, because everybody had to keep the mood light. And people just do practical jokes all the time. Like, you walk in the bathroom, you see an arm sticking out of the toilet. And, you know,

just kind of stuff like that. The dummy used for the head turning was so real that sometimes I'd come in in the morning, and go "Hi, Linda. Oh." So I have to go back and give Kudos to Peter Blatty again, because my opinion is if there's no script, there's no movie. I don't care who the actors are, you know, the special effects or cinematography, if you don't have a script, you don't have a movie. And by the way, people a lot of times talk about the curse of *The Exorcist* that you can't make another film. But it's like, hey, guys, you haven't come up with the script yet! You know, one that would work with the film.

1:39:13 (Approx. 43 minutes in)

Alexandre Philippe

I'm glad you mentioned that about Blatty, actually, since I made *Leap of Faith*, you know, I've been corresponding quite a bit with his son, Michael. And he's wonderful. I got to meet him when I drove down from northern Washington down to San Francisco about a week ago. And we finally get to meet in person, we went to a diner and he brought me some books, autographed books, like *Psycho* with a signature from Janet Leigh. It's just incredible stuff. I mean, he's just a lovely, lovely man.

Eileen Dietz

He's totally livid about this new *Exorcist* film that's coming out, you know, he's just like, it's got to be piece of crap. He's so angry about it. We have to just wait and see, I guess.

Anna Bogutskaya

I'm conscious of time and of the fact that I've heard the both of you, but I wanted to ask anyone watching, if you have any questions for Eileen or Alexandre, please put them in the chat. And we'll go through them. We've still got a few minutes before we have to wrap up.

Eileen Dietz

Let me just take the moment here if I could. If you guys would like any mementos from *The Exorcist* and stuff like that, I do sell them. Like this Pazuzu statue. I do a lot of cameos, and I go, Hey, Zuzu Can you do me a favor? What

do you want, I'm busy. What are you doing? Possessing people, what do you think? So that's what my cameos are like. And this is the book I was talking about, you really find everything you want to know about me and about following your dreams. Which I think is so important because people just want to negate your dreams a lot. And it's not only if you want to be an actor, if you want to open a wardrobe shop for you know, anything you want to do with your life even being on that you got to follow your dreams. I have a sister who is an author, and she said, if you drop a dream, it breaks. And I always liked that. So that's my little commercial. And if you want to find out more about it, I invite you to go on my Facebook page. And you can send me a private message, and I'll give you kind of details. And yes, I can send things to you.

Anna Bogutskaya

And Eileen, I've got a question for you from Steven Choe. Thank you so much for your first-hand. Comments. Your presence here is thrilling. What are your observations of what Friedkin was like on set? He seems like he would have been a director who was decisive and knows what he wants. Demanding. Perhaps he was constantly pushing the envelope in *The Exorcist*. Was he self aware?

Eileen Dietz

I found him to be, you know, when directing, at least my impression of it was that he wasn't terribly social. He wasn't one of those directors that fooled around with the cast, you know, it was really all about the shooting, and Owen Roizman, he just passed, but he worked closely with Billy Friedkin and he would tell Billy about shots that would work and shots that wouldn't work. And then they'd go see dailies and sometimes he'd yell "who shot that? That won't cut together." He was really, like I said, really quite serious. But he kind of left me alone, except when we shot the masturbation scene, which is actually very, very funny how he directed that. You really have to read my book to find out about it. But it was very funny. And eventually he cleared everybody out. So I think that answers your question. And we were very behind in the schedule, and whenever we were behind, he lost money. And so there was there was a seriousness, at least for me. He also brought a priest every day to bless the set.

Anna Bogutskaya

I'm not surprised I probably would have done the same thing if I was making a film about demonic possession! We are very close to needing to wrap up. So if there are any last questions, please put them in the chat. Otherwise we will have to wrap up here. And I just want to thank Eileen and Alexandre, for your time today and for your insights and your perspectives on the film. And I guess I'm gonna hand back over to Stacy or Kris for the rest of the sessions.

Alexandre Philippe

Thank you so much.

Eileen Dietz

Thank you! Kris, can I go back to bed?

Kristopher Woofter

You can go back to bed, get some sleep.

1:45:45 (Approx. 50 minutes in)

Eileen Dietz

Hey, guys, you were great. I gotta watch the movie again because I didn't know about all stuff that they used in the movie, particularly what Alexandre was saying. Because you know, all of you approach the film in a different way than an actor. So, I've learned a lot. I'm glad I came on early. So goodbye everybody, have a great day! Well, I'm sure they're coming out with a new film to celebrate the 50th anniversary. Can they do that? I'm sure they're releasing the film. So everybody, go see it. And if you do write to my Facebook page, I feel like a commercial, you can ask me one or two questions, and mention this Zoom, and I'll be glad to talk to you about it. You know, just go on longer. That's fine with me.

Alexandre Philippe

Bye, thank you so much. It means so much. Thanks.

Kristopher Woofter

Thank you. So I've put Eileen's merchandise page of her website in the chat, if you want to check it out. There's some fun stuff in there. And also Alexandre was coming in from Thessaloniki for a film festival he's at, so this is why he was sort of popping in and popping out. We have a we have a break until 1PM just for people to stretch their legs, so we'll be back then. Thank you.

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