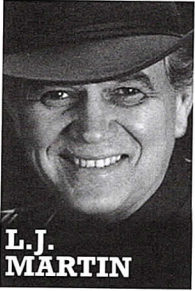


## To hell with Hollywood!

OK, being a lifelong movie buff, I really don't mean it. I love movies and admittedly am a groupie. I love to watch celebs and vicariously walk in their footsteps. John Wayne, Joel McCrea, Clint (wouldn't you love to be recognized by your first name?), Palance, Costner (or even only by your last name!) and many others are semi-deities to us Western fans.



L.J. MARTIN

But also, after 35 years of banging away on novels, nonfiction works and screenplays, and waiting for Hollywood to come calling, one tends to vent and wallow in frustration. So, what to do? Stop waiting, that's what.

Make the damn movie yourself.

Being a lifelong photographer and videographer helps (I was the school photographer in seventh grade), but thousands out there know cameras. And thousands – or hundreds of thousands – want to make a movie or at least be involved in one. Now with consumer-priced equipment and software, you don't need MGM or Paramount or Universal.

You can have a studio in your bedroom office. Final Cut Pro, Premiere or the free DaVinci Resolve; software that puts what was formerly a several-hundred-thousand-dollar editing bay at hand. And yes, I said free. A dozen consumer-priced cameras (Sony, Canon, Nikon, Pentax) shoot video in today's standard 4K, and the cameras I settled upon, Blackmagic, shoot in 4K and 6K.

You can have a cinema quality camera shooting 6K for just over two grand, plus lenses, or a 4K for just over \$1,200. And the fact is, films making money are being shot with iPhones. Theaters across the country project only a 2K resolution, and many streaming services require only 1080p.

Yeah, I know this technical talk is gobbledygook to most of us. So what? Like I said, nearly everyone would like to be involved in a film, and tech types are no exception. And many will join you on a film journey just for credit.

Story? Yeah, my wife and I are writers and have been making a living at the craft for many years, so with 150 or more books to our credit we have lots of story inventory to draw from. But the fact is great stories are out there in the public domain – open for anyone's use. And there are literally hundreds of fine writers who would love to see their tale on the big, or even the little, screen, and would pitch in their work for a piece of the action.

Speaking of a piece of the action, how does one go from action to account ... bank account? I'm just about to release my first full length (105-minute) film, so I'm yet to become an expert. I would never, however, have invested hard-earned bucks into a movie had it not been for the obvious world-wide hunger for content.

When I set out on the project *Eye for Eye*, adapted from one of my novellas, I was encouraged by the fact Amazon was paying 15 cents-a-streaming hour for content. Doesn't sound like much, but when they have a billion or more people to whom to expose your film, it was making independent filmmakers with a decent product a hundred grand a year. Of course, during the process of making my film they dropped that to one cent-a-streaming hour and the hundred thou dropped a zero. Alas, what to do?

Luckily, Amazon is the biggest fish but not the only fish

### *Eye for Eye*

For information and to see a trailer on *Eye for Eye*, log on to [EyeForEyeWestern.com](http://EyeForEyeWestern.com).

Cattle king Brad Braddock (John Savage) yells at cook Norvan (Matt Mhoon) in *Eye for Eye*. All photos by Terecita Baker

