



Left: Hero Quint (Shane Clouse) braces a Triple R cowhand. Soiled dove Maybell (Kira Guay) in background. Right: Quint packs coach gun and Henry rifle to hunt killers.

in the sea. Now there are 200 or more streaming services all over the world, and for a couple of hundred bucks (for Spanish, more for other languages) you can get foreign language captions on your film. The world is now the independent filmmaker's oyster. And there are distributors and aggregators who'll distribute your film for a piece of the action.

This concept is not foreign to me, to risk a pun, as for many years I've been selling books via Amazon and other internet sources, and monthly enjoy checks from Japan, India the UK, etc. In fact, I was a cofounder of an uber-successful company, Wolfpack Publishing, built on the concept of working with authors the same way these companies work with independent filmmakers.

I was fortunate to have a friend, David Mirisch, who would accept credit as executive producer and used his many contacts and lifelong experience in Hollywood to at-

tract a pair of fine actors, John Savage and Blanca Blanco, who proved their worth not only with their talent but by establishing the work ethic on the set. David is also the consummate PR professional, and his expertise is critical to the film's success. Also, he's a member of the internationally famous Mirisch Picture Family that produced 72 motion pictures, won 24 Academy Awards – including three Oscars for Best Picture of the Year: *West Side Story*, *In The Heat of The Night* and *The Apartment*. David's forgotten more about film than I'll ever know.

Shane Clouse, a friend for more than a dozen years, also happened to have been named Montana's finest actor and is an unsurpassed songwriter and balladeer. Shane wrote and performed the theme song, "Eye for Eye." Shane allowed the use of another of his works, "Faraway Horses." We also used one to which I'd written the lyrics while he did the music and performed, "Been Some Stayed Some."

The film couldn't have been made without Shane's talent and hard work. And how often do you have a star who'll double as wrangler and provide his own horses and mules?

Low budget? You bet. How many times have you seen the writer/director/producer with hammer in hand building the saloon bar or the privy? Or digging into his closet for wardrobe? That's me. Or the co-producer and wife, *New York Times* bestselling author Kat Martin, housing a few and feeding 25 players and crew who stomped around the house with mud-covered brogans? Or allowing her home to be turned into a set? Or acting as cook, costumer, makeup artist and occasional chauffeur?

So, pick up your iPhone, download DaVinci Resolve, be prepared to either hire or spend hours if not weeks learning a new skill, lean on friends and acquaintances and make a movie.

Ask me in a year or so if it was all worthwhile monetarily. I've long lived by the adage: "If it ain't fun, you're doing it wrong." Yeah, I've lost a lot of sleep over the past year ... but I've had a hell of a good time, met a hell of a bunch of talented young people eager to be part of a project and kept my gray-matter churning.

Success? I keep score by the dollars, so we'll see. It's my belief the consumer is the ultimate judge of one's work. But no matter, no one can take away the laughs and comradeship.

Yes, I've rushed in where angels fear to tread, but that's been my mantra and my wife's frustration for many years. And who knows, I may even get my dough back.

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