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Making Movies With Orson Welles: A Memoir

Andrew J. Rausch
Gary Graver
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For the last fifteen years of Orson Welles' life, "…it was up to me to make his visions a reality," writes cinematographer Gary Graver in this enlightening memoir and homage to the legendary filmmaker. Andrew J. Rausch, the author of *Fifty Filmmakers: Conversations with Directors from Roger Avary to Steven Zaillian* and several other books on film, began this book with Gary Graver and completed it after Graver's death in 2006.

In 1970, while sitting in Schwab's drugstore in Hollywood, Graver read in *Variety* that Welles was in town. After finagling an unannounced meeting with the *Citizen Kane* director and asking for work, Graver became his primary cameraman and friend until Welles' death in 1985. In a conversational tone, Graver recounts their collaboration on the documentaries *Filming Othello* and *F for Fake*, about art forger Elmyr d'Hory, as well as numerous projects, commercials, and narrations. Their greatest collaboration, he contends, was their six-year filming and editing of *The Other Side of the Wind*, an unfinished movie about an aging independent film director who hopes to revive his waning career with one last hit.

Graver's stories divulge their camera, film, lighting techniques (and tricks) for creating the critically acclaimed yet low-budget productions. With the same reverence given to his filmmaking skills, Graver describes Welles' unpredictability and humor (which often led to surprised actors and crew), insomnia (which led to late-night calls and early morning shoots), and eccentricities (such as halting shoots to watch the television shows *All in the Family* or *M*A*S*H).*

When not filming for Welles—always unpaid for the mere privilege of working alongside a genius—the self-taught cinematographer was employed by other notable filmmakers, including Roger Corman, Paul Bartel, John Cassavetes, Ron Howard, and Steven Spielberg. Graver's memoir is a valuable companion to his documentary, *Working with Orson Welles*.

While this look at Welles' frenetic, independent filmmaking is a boon to film scholars and critics, fans of the actor and director will enjoy discovering the man behind the black cape. *Making Movies with Orson Welles* reveals why watching movies by the eccentric Hollywood giant is such an exhilarating experience.
ANGELA LEEPER (October 13, 2008)

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