

[Movie List](#)

Alan Smithee (also Allen Smithee) is an official pseudonym used by film directors who wish to disown a project. Coined in 1968 and used until it was formally discontinued in 2000,[1] it was the sole pseudonym used by members of the Directors Guild of America (DGA) when a director, dissatisfied with the final product, proved to the satisfaction of a guild panel that he or she had not been able to exercise creative control over a film. The director was also required by guild rules not to discuss the circumstances leading to the move or even to acknowledge being the project's director. [2]

History

before 1968, DGA rules did not permit directors to be credited under a pseudonym. This was intended to prevent producers from forcing them upon directors, which would inhibit the development of their résumés.[1] the guild also required that the director be credited, in support of the DGA philosophy that the director was the primary creative force behind a film. [2]

The Smithee pseudonym was created for use on the film *Death of a Gunfighter*, released in 1969. During its filming, lead actor Richard Widmark was unhappy with director Robert Totten and arranged to have him replaced by Don Siegel. Siegel later estimated that Totten had spent 25 days filming, while he himself had spent 9–10 days. Each had roughly an equal amount of footage in Siegel's final edit. But Siegel made clear that Widmark had effectively been in charge the entire time. [2] When the film was finished, Siegel did not want to take the credit for it and Totten refused to take credit in his place. The DGA panel hearing the dispute agreed that the film did not represent either director's creative vision. [1]

The original proposal was to credit the fictional "Al Smith", but that was deemed too common a name, and in fact was already in use within the film industry. The last name was first changed to "Smithe", then "Smithee", [1] which was thought to be distinctive enough to avoid confusion with similar names but without drawing attention to itself. [2] Critics praised the film and its "new" director, with *The New York Times* commenting that the film was "sharply directed by Allen Smithee who has an adroit facility for scanning faces and extracting sharp background detail," [3] and Roger Ebert commenting, "Director Allen Smithee, a name I'm not familiar with, allows his story to unfold naturally." [4]

Following its coinage, the pseudonym "Alan Smithee" was applied retroactively to *Fade In* (also known as *Iron Cowboy*), a film starring Burt Reynolds and directed by Jud Taylor, which was first released before the release of *Death of a Gunfighter*. [5] Taylor also requested the pseudonym for *City in Fear* (1980) with David Janssen. Taylor commented on its use when he received the DGA's Robert B. Aldrich Achievement Award in 2003:

I had a couple of problems in my career having to do with editing and not having the contractually-required number of days in the editing room that my agent couldn't resolve. So, I went to the Guild and said, "This is what's going on." The Guild went to bat for me. I got Alan Smithee on them

both. It was a signal to the industry from a creative rights point of view that the shows had been tampered with. [6]

The spelling "Alan Smithee" became standard, and the Internet Movie Database lists about two dozen feature films and many more television features and series episodes credited to this name.[7] A persistent urban legend suggests that this particular spelling was chosen because it is an anagram of the phrase "the alias men", but this is apocryphal.

Over the years the name and its purpose became more widely known. Some directors violated the embargo on discussing their use of the pseudonym. In 1998, the film *An Alan Smithee Film: Burn Hollywood Burn* was released, in which a man named Alan Smithee (Eric Idle) wishes to disavow a film he has directed, but is unable to do so because the only pseudonym he is permitted to use is his own name. The film was directed by Arthur Hiller, who reported to the DGA that producer Joe Eszterhas had interfered with his creative control, and successfully removed his own name from the film, so Alan Smithee was credited instead. The film was a commercial and critical failure, released in only 19 theaters, grossing only \$45,779 in the US with a budget of about \$10 million,[8] and Rotten Tomatoes reports an aggregate critical rating of only 8% positive.[9] The harsh negative publicity that surrounded the film drew unwanted mainstream attention to the pseudonym. Following this, the DGA retired the name; for the film *Supernova* (2000), dissatisfied director Walter Hill was instead credited as "Thomas Lee." [1]

Hello

Hello how are you doing today?

Meanwhile, the name had been used outside of the film industry, and it continues to be used in other media and on film projects not under the purview of the DGA. Although the pseudonym was intended for use by directors, the Internet Movie Database lists several uses as writer credits as well.[7] Variations of the name have also occasionally been used, such as "Alan and Alana Smithy" (screenwriters for the 2011 film *Hidden 3D*).

Historical uses of the "Alan Smithee" credit (or equivalent), in chronological order:

Film direction

The following films credit "Smithee"; the actual director is listed when known. In a few cases the alias is used for a creative contributor other than the director, shown in boldface.

Fade In aka Iron Cowboy (1968), directed by Jud Taylor [10]

Death of a Gunfighter (1969), directed separately by Robert Totten and Don Siegel [10]

The Barking Dog (1978), director unknown [10]

Gypsy Angels (1980), director unknown [10]

City in Fear (1980), directed by Jud Taylor

Fun and Games (1980), directed by Paul Bogart [11]

Student Bodies (1981), directed by Mickey Rose, produced by Michael Ritchie under the name of Smithee

Twilight Zone: The Movie (1983), Second Assistant Director Anderson House used the pseudonym for the first segment of the film, in which actor Vic Morrow and two children were killed in a helicopter accident during production. This represents a rare instance where the "Alan Smithee" credit was taken by an assistant director. [12]

Appointment with Fear (1985), directed by Ramzi Thomas [10]

Stitches (1985), directed by Rod Holcomb [10]

Let's Get Harry (1986), directed by Stuart Rosenberg [10]

Morgan Stewart's Coming Home (1987), directed by Paul Aaron and Terry Windsor [10]

Ghost Fever (1987), directed by Lee Madden [10]

I Love N.Y. (1987) written and directed by Gianni Bozzacchi. [10]

Catchfire (1990) as originally released in theaters, directed by Dennis Hopper. A subsequent video release under the title Backtrack was Hopper's intended "director's cut", for which he received credit. [10]

The Shrimp on the Barbie (1990), directed by Michael Gottlieb [10]

Solar Crisis (1990), directed by Richard C. Sarafian [10]

Bloodsucking Pharaohs in Pittsburg (1991), directed by Dean Tschetter [10]

The Birds II: Land's End (1994), directed by Rick Rosenthal

National Lampoon's Senior Trip (1995), directed by Kelly Makin with a segment credited to Smithee
Raging Angels (1995)

Smoke n Lightnin (1995), director unknown [10]

Hellraiser: Bloodline (1996), directed by Kevin Yagher [10]

Exit (1996), directed by Ric Roman Waugh [10]
Mighty Ducks the Movie: The First Face-Off (1997), co-directed by Steve Langley
Dilemma (1997), directed by Eric Larson and Eric Louzil [10]
Le Zombi de Cap-Rouge (1997), directed by Simon Robideaux [10]
Sub Down (1997), directed by Gregg Champion [10]
Picture of Priority (1998), director unknown [10]
An Alan Smithee Film: Burn Hollywood Burn (1998), directed by Arthur Hiller [10]
Wadd: The Life & Times of John C. Holmes (1998), directed by Cass Paley
The Coroner (1999), directed by Brian Katkin and Juan A. Mas [10]
A River Made to Drown In (1999), directed by James Merendino
Woman Wanted (2000), directed by Kiefer Sutherland [10]
The Disciples (2000), directed by Kirk Wong [10]
In the Wrong Hands (2002), directed by Chris Johnston and James A. Seale [10]
Fugitives Run (2003), directed by Philip Spink [10]
Eep! (Dutch: Iep!) (2010), directed by Rita Horst as Ellen Smith, the only time a Dutch director asked for this credit. Ellen is a Dutch female name which is pronounced the same as Alan.
Old 37 (2015), directed by Christian Winters [13] [14]

The following films were credited to their actual directors during their original theatrical presentations. When re-edited for TV, or for other reasons, the Smithee credit was used:

Dune (1984), only for the version as extended and edited for broadcast television; directed by David Lynch. In addition to the "Smithee" directing credit, for the broadcast TV version Lynch's screenwriting credit goes to "Judas Booth" (a reference to Judas Iscariot and John Wilkes Booth)
Gunhed (1989) as released in the United States, directed by Masato Harada
The Guardian (1990) only for the version as edited for cable television, directed by William Friedkin, credited to "Alan Von Smithee"
Rudy (1993) as edited for television, directed by David Anspaugh
Heat (1995) as edited for television, directed by Michael Mann
Meet Joe Black (1998), as edited for in-flight viewing and cable television, by Martin Brest
The Insider (1999) as edited for television, directed by Michael Mann

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