

BackTalk

SAM RAIMI

Jamie Sorcher chats with the director of *Spider-Man 2*, *Spider-Man*, *A Simple Plan*, *Darkman*, and *Evil Dead*. (See page 106 for a review of the *Spider-Man 2* DVD.)

***Spider-Man 2* was great, but the operating-room scene with Doc Ock was terrifying!**

We call that the Birth of Doc Ock. I wanted to frighten the audience and make Doc Ock a very feared adversary for our hero. I started in horror films, and I employed a lot of techniques I learned from making those movies in that sequence.

In fact, I understand you've recently produced three horror movies: *The Grudge*, *Scarecrow*, and *Boogeyman*.

That's right. I have a company called Ghost House Pictures for bringing crackerjack fun and scary pictures to the screen — similar to the old Hammer horror films.

Are you looking for any scream queens?

Always. If you have a good scream, let's hear it.

[lets out a blood-curdling scream]

Not bad. Nail that high, piercing, nerve-rattling aspect of it and you're in.

What's the best horror film you've ever seen — something that made you squirm in your seat?

Night of the Living Dead. It terrified me.

Your movies are like roller coasters. Do people lose something when they watch them at home?

Absolutely, because laughter is contagious. The same is true with horror — when people are shrieking alongside you, their fear is contagious. The size of the screen also has a lot to do with a movie's impact — especially with something like the *Spider-Man* films. But at their heart, those movies are love stories, so I hope that part of them is just as strong when people watch them on DVD.

Do you prefer to watch movies at home or in a movie theater?

I don't go out as much as I'd like. But the best way to see a picture is on the big screen with an audience and a big tub of popcorn.

What was the last movie you saw?

It was in my office on DVD — *Narc*. A great movie. Great directing, great writing, great performances.

Can you give me five favorite films, just off the cuff?

John Huston's *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. I love watching how this sinful desire for gold gets into these men's hearts and destroys them. And I like how some of them rise above it. Robert Wise's *The Haunting* is another — amazing use of camera and sound, and great crafting of a horror film by a master. Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* — just brilliant comedy, brilliant direction. John Huston's *The Man Who Would Be King* — another story of friendship and greed with great, great performances. And Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* because of his breathtaking vision of the future.

A lot of people feel you've just made the best comic-book movie ever.

Wow. Actually, I'd have to give that award to Richard Donner's *Superman*. There are so many fine comic-book movies — I could never claim that honor.

What's life like for you beyond *Spider-Man*?

I couldn't think about anything except *Spider-Man* right now. It's such a big job and so important to me to get it right that I couldn't hold any other picture in my head.

Will there be a happy ending between Peter Parker and MJ?

I can't tell you, because I don't quite know how it's going to end. It's like a real relationship for me. We're going to do our best to keep it on the positive, but they're going to have some rocky times ahead. **S&V**