

"CROSSING THE LINE"
Directed by Martha Elcan

"CROSSING THE LINE"

A short film of an obsessed man determined to prevent his wife from leaving him -- with a twist.

**Screening: Thursday, May 21 - 1pm
Crest Theatre
Shorts Program 3**

"Crossing the Line" shows a great command of the language of film by director Martha Elcan, as well as a sympathetic heart with her performers. There's a whole lot of movie in those five short minutes.
Mick Garris - Creator/Exec. Producer "Masters of Horror"

NICELY DONE!! ...very moving and that's not easy to accomplish in five minutes.
Marc Buckland - Exec. Producer "My Name is Earl"

Well made... a thoughtful job!
Bruce Beresford - Director, "Driving Miss Daisy," "Tender Mercies"

"Director Elcan delivers a terrific short film"
Bruce Cohen - Exec. Producer, "American Beauty," "Pushing Daisies," "Milk"

Marty Elcan, director of "Crossing the Line," worked as an Assistant Director for over 20 years on such high profile films and television shows as "Driving Miss Daisy," "Steel Magnolias," "Mystic Pizza," "Hill Street Blues," "Picket Fences," "The Grass Harp," "Amazing Stories," "Romy and Michele's High School Reunion," "Once and Again," "Inherit the Wind" (George C. Scott and Jack Lemmon), "My Favorite Martian" and "Six Feet Under." In this capacity, she received three DGA Award nominations, and learned from and worked side by side with the best: Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese, Donald Petrie, Bruce Beresford, Herbert Ross, Dan Petrie, Danny DeVito, and Clint Eastwood.

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She started her directing with the multiple-award-winning short film “There Goes the Groom” in 1997, which led to her being hired to direct FOX’s “Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction.” She made another award-winning short in 2002 called “The Hit” and directed second unit on a feature and on a tv pilot, a small commercial, a documentary that was nominated for an L.A.-Emmy, and several award-winning national Public service announcements, but still quite hadn’t broken into mainstream directing work. It was time to do a new short. In an industry where only 7% of the directing assignments go to women, it had to be special.

Frustrated after working for months to find or write the perfect short film script, she asked a small group of friends for suggestions. Producer Suzanne Lyons told her a story her husband James Thorpe had written and when the chills formed on Martha’s arms, she knew this was the one. James, as it turned out, was a very accomplished writer-producer in television, and though his story, as written, was on a grander scale than Marty’s budget could afford, he allowed her the right to use his story and adapt it to make the shoot affordable.

Marty had worked with Anne Ramsay (perhaps best known for playing Helen Hunt’s sister Lisa on “Mad About You”) on “Six Feet Under” and knew she was perfect for the lead role of Angela. She and James Eckhouse had formed a friendship while working on “Once and Again.” Both of the actors enthusiastically came to the project when they read the script.

Without much money to fund the project, many favors were called in. Her husband Scott Guthrie, Gaffer (Lighting Director) on “My Name is Earl,” helped assemble the crew and get lighting equipment donated from Cinelease. Her producer worked at Sunset Gower Studios, and combined with Marty’s relationships formed while working there on “Six Feet Under,” they were able to shoot on several of the sets there for free. The couple playing Angela’s parents generously donated their house for shooting. Marty had just directed another project sponsored by Kodak so they gave her film for half price. The film was a miracle in action.

The shoot was not without problems, however. At 9pm the night before shooting, she learned that the P.A. had not picked up the film! Kodak was closed for the weekend and unreachable until Monday morning. Producer Janet Viscome called everyone she knew on the Sunset-Gower lot. The entire film was in serious danger of being cancelled, throwing months of prep and prepaid expenses out the window. The only show still shooting that late on a Friday night was “Heroes,” and the producers came to the rescue, lending Marty 20 400’ rolls of new film stock on the promise it would be returned on Monday. Not ever having met Marty, they simply (and astoundingly) trusted a stranger; they truly were “Heroes.”

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The morning of shooting, the equipment truck didn't show up. The driver had turned down the wrong cul-de-sac and was stuck, unable to back up with the generator attached. Only with the help of the entire lighting and grip crew, the truck was finally able to make its way to the set – two hours late --an excruciatingly long time for a shoot that is only two days long.

Important to the story was a distinctive car – it had been decided early on that the car would be red. Janet had reserved a red car at a car rental agency, but when she went to pick it up Friday night, they had rented their only red car, and no other car rental places were open. Just then, the P.A. who had been doing runs pulled up. His car was red. Saved again.

To Marty's surprise, a policeman showed up mid-day the first shooting day with the intention of shutting down production. Everything had been painstakingly filed through the film permit office, so she showed the police the permit. But he “didn't interpret” it the same way as the permit office had specified and instructed the production to shut down until the permit office could be reached -- on Monday – after the shoot was over. Fortunately, the head of the Neighborhood Association and the homeowners of the film location were friends, and once again, production somehow went on.

All the snags and near catastrophes faded into the distance now that “Crossing the Line” is invited to be in the esteemed Delray Beach Film Festival. It is with great pride that “Crossing the Line” screens here.

As for what's next, Marty just completed her feature film directorial debut “Next of Kin,” featuring Ed Begley, Jr., Bess Armstrong, George Newbern, Jeremy London, Octavia Spencer, Kate Orsini and Andrew Lockridge – a film job that resulted from a producer viewing “Crossing the Line.”