I'M ONLY THE WRITER

Everett de Roche

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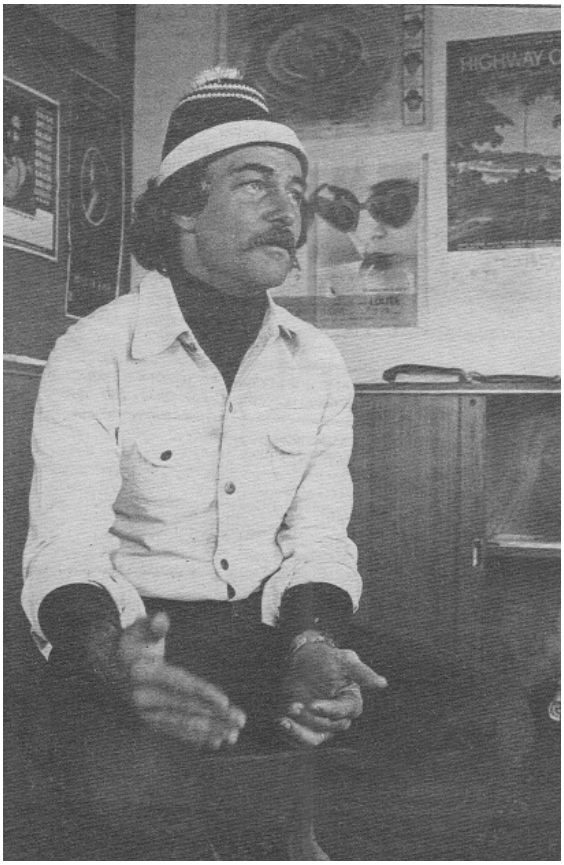
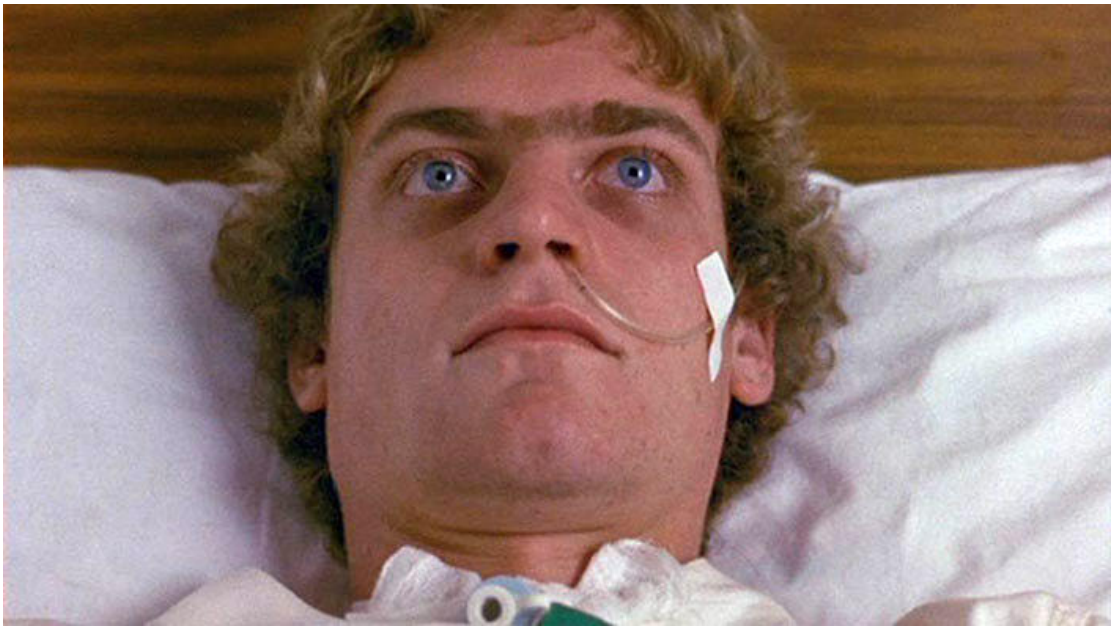


Everett de Roche at home in 1980

As the number of Australian Films produced since 1970 increases, so does the eagerness of critics to determine to what degree directors and scriptwriters have left their "auteurist" imprints. One scriptwriter who is receiving considerable critical scrutiny at the moment is Everett de Roche. Born in the U.S. in 1946, De Roche emigrated to Australia in the early 1970s (essentially to avoid being conscripted for the Vietnam war) and changed his name to "De Roche" as a kind of hippie joke. He began work as a journalist in Brisbane and then moved to Crawford Productions in Melbourne as a staff writer. Since going freelance, De Roche has written for television and the cinema. So far, four of his scripts have been filmed: *Patrick* (1978)*, Long Weekend* (1978)*, Snapshot* (1979)*,* and *Harlequin* (1980)*. Harlequin* was described by critic David Stratton as "inept and utterly absurd… the only Australian film that was utterly Americanised." On the other hand, Quentin Tarantino, who was inspired by "trash cinema" declared in 2008 that "everything Everett De Roche wrote is one of my favourite films."

Scenes from *Patrick* are actually echoed in American films like *Fatal Attraction* and (by his own admission) in Tarantino's *Kill Bill.* During the 1970s – the era of "Ozploitation" thrillers full of exploding cars and grisly murders - De Roche was the go-to writer. *Road Games* (1981) directed by Richard Franklin was written as a homage to Hitchcock's *Rear Window.* This was followed by *The Race for Yankee Zephyr* (1981) and *Razorback* (1984) – described as "*Jaws* with a wild boar in the Ozback". The film became a classic with fans of horror and suspense.

While at Crawfords, and for the princely sum of $250 each (five times what he earned as a journalist) De Roche wrote scripts for *Homicide, Matlock Police, Division 4, Bluey* and *Ryan* eventually earning $2,500 per episode. Later he wrote telemovies such as *Fortress* (1985) and *Windrider* (1986) and the original pilot for *Police Rescue.* Crawford producer Tony Cavanah described De Roche as the "most successful screenwriter in Australia – like an Australian Stephen King…he was also charming, funny and brilliant". However De Roche was far more than just a master of Ozploitation. His later work included scripts on internationally popular children's dramas: *Ship to Shore, Ocean Girl, Cyber Girl,* and *The Saddle Club.*



Robert Thompson as the comatose “Patrick”

Paul Davies: How long did it take to write *Patrick*?

Everett De Roche: The initial writing which I did three or four years ago took 10 days. That draft was 3 ½ hours long. It then became a matter of pruning it down. Once (director) Richard Franklin became involved there as even more re-writing.

Paul Davies: How different is the final script from your concept.

Everett De Roche: Originally it was a mystery where you were in doubt about what was happening. Richard made it a suspense-thriller and let the audience know from the start who the baddie was.

Paul Davies: *Patrick* deals with paranormal phenomena. Is that a theme you have wanted to write about?

Everett De Roche: Four years ago there weren’t many films like *Patrick*. *The Exorcist* was about the only one. But between writing and completing the film a whole stack of occult-type films came out.

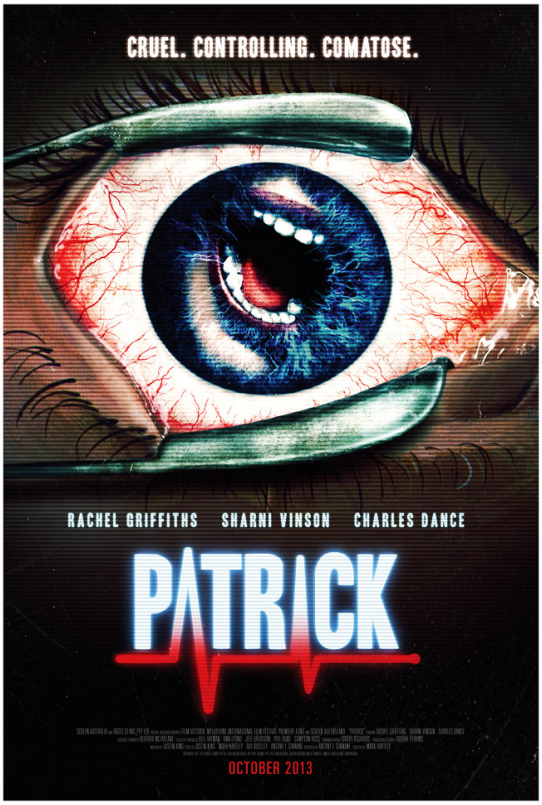
Paul Davies: Did this worry you?

Everett De Roche: Very much, because we would be accused of jumping on the bandwagon.

Paul Davies: To what degree did you research the script?

Everett De Roche: Most of it came from my imagination. When I did get a chance to research it, I found, surprisingly, that there were many cases which were similar. I then showed the script to a team of neuro-surgeons at the Alfred Hospital, fully expecting them to say it was bullshit. But quite the opposite happened. They more

or less verified the feasibility and helped give the script technical authenticity. Where I had made up the names of the drugs the supplied the real names.



Patrick - the remake 2013

Paul Davies: The special effects in *Patrick* are quite complex. How circumscribed is a writer by what is physically practical?

Everett De Roche: Ideally, you wouldn't let it influence you, leaving such problems to the production crew. But one is inevitably conscious of such things because there is no sense writing a sequence that requires an effect you can't reproduce. At the time I conceived *Patrick* I didn't see it as a special-effects type film. But once we brought in an expert from the U.S. (Conrad Rothman), and found out what he could do, we realized how valuable special effects could be.

Paul Davies: When *Patrick* was shown during voting screenings for the Australian Film Awards in 1978 many people laughed. Did you expect that reaction?

Sir Robert Helpmann as the evil Dr. Roget

Everett De Roche: We expected laughs but not necessarily in the same places. Let's face it, the Awards voters constitute and unusual audience. They have had to sit through a lot of films, some good, some bad, and *Patrick* as I remember was shown at the end. *Patrick* hasn't had that sort of reaction elsewhere. I as at a screening in Perth where people jumped where they should have jumped and laughed where they should laugh.

Paul Davies: Is *Patrick* as much a love story as a mystery-thriller?

Everett De Roche: It's a monster story, and I cut anything that didn't relate to Patrick as a monster. One of the first things to go was the romantic aspect. The biggest problem was deciding whether to make the monster the threat, or someone people would try and understand. In *Jaws,* for instance, you don't understand why the shark goes around attacking people and that's the frightening thing. Originally, I wanted to understand who Patrick was and what motivated him, but I ran the risk of it becoming boring. People just want to be thrilled.

Paul Davies: That is almost a definition of a commercial film: one that offers a thrill, instead of insight into human behavior…

Everett De Roche: To me, commercialism is the ability to make something comprehensible to an audience. You can be subtle to the point of obscurity, which is not only bad filmmaking, but also rude. A painter can paint a picture, and if no on likes it he has only wasted his time and a bit of canvas. If you do that in films, you have wasted the money of the people who financed it, and of those who paid to be entertained.

Paul Davies: It's hard to imagine an Australian producer risking a lot on a film that was obscure…

Everett De Roche: It's a small country and no one can afford to take chances. I am talking now as if I am very commercially minded. If I were talking to a network executive, I'd take the other tack and be accused of being aesthetic and arty fartsy. The answer has to be somewhere in the middle.

Paul Davies: Is it an option to write low-budget films so that you don't have to worry as much about returns on investment?

Everett De Roche: Yes, you can write a low-budget film without compromise on quality, providing it is written with inbuilt money-savers.

Paul Davies: When did you write *Long Weekend* ?

Everett De Roche: I was writing an episode of *Bluey* and I wrote *Long Weekend* as a way of getting out of what I should have been doing. Again it was written very quickly – 10 days or so.

Paul Davies: Do you like working on several projects at once?

Everett De Roche: I don't have any choice because I can't afford to knock work back. If I have only two projects going at once I start getting worried about unemployment.

Paul Davies: *Long Weekend* is essentially a two-handed piece, though nature could be considered a third character?

Everett De Roche: Yes Nature is supposed to be the hero of the piece. The two characters, Peter and Marcia, are pretty unsympathetic. They invade the Bush and the Bush deals with them.

Paul Davies: Why do you say the Bush is supposed to be the hero?

Everett De Roche: Isn't it? Perhaps it hasn't worked. *Long Weekend* is experimental, and it relied on a number of things to work. Unfortunately the Bush comes across as a threat too early; it should have emerged as a threat after the audience had sympathized with the animals. And I don't think that sympathy is there. *Long Weekend* would have been much better if the audience had been told at the beginning that Peter and Marcia were going to die. This way, it wouldn't have had to sympathize with them, and could have concerned itself solely with when this was going to happen. Such is the nature of suspense.

Paul Davies: The ending, where Peter is killed, comes as a shock. Was there any other way of ending the film?

Everett De Roche: A large slab of the script was omitted because of the difficulty of working with animals. I wrote an enormously complicated sequence for near the end where the animals give Peter a second chance. They want him to wise up, and he is at the point of doing so when he hears a truck in the distance. He dashes off to the highway, and the animals decide there is no hope. Poetically they leave it to another man to kill him. Of course the animals can't tell you that they are the sympathetic characters; you have to rely on music, and the way things are shot. Again, unfortunately, the music in the opening sequence is very heavy, and there is a sense of menace about the animals.

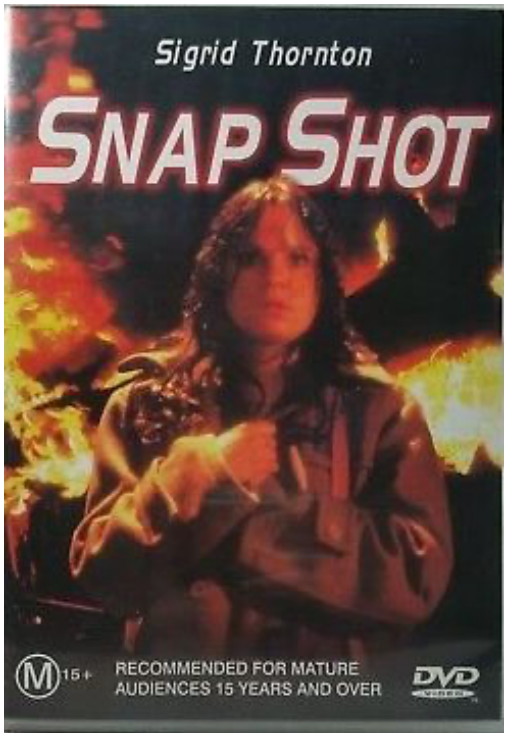
Paul Davies: Are Peter and Marcia a typical Australian couple?

Everett De Roche: No. I think the film could have been set anywhere. We all go camping with the idea of getting closer to nature, armed with cans of Mortein and God knows what else. *Long Weekend* is not supposed to be a heavy environmental statement; it is just a very condensed way of saying that Nature is capable of looking after itself if man gets too out of line.

Paul Davies: Are you happier with *Patrick* or *Long Weekend* ?

Everett De Roche: I think *Patrick* was a safer story to do; it's more traditional. You know who the villain is from the start, and it develops along traditional suspense lines. *Long Weekend* is far more experimental.

Paul Davies: The characters in *Snapshot* are far less realized than those in *Patrick.* Is the difference the script or the director?



Everett De Roche: A lot of it has to do with the script. Richard and I worked on and off on *Patrick* for about three years, whereas *Snapshot* was written in 10 days. I think it is a great credit to Simon Wincer that he got the film off the ground.

Paul Davies: Was your working relationship with Wincer different to that with Franklin.

Everett De Roche: Yes, Richard likes to be in on every aspect of the scripting, whereas Simon prefers to look at the finished draft and act as a devil's advocate. With Simon it might be valuable to work with a script editor as well, because a writer needs someone he can ring up in the middle of the night for feedback. Simon is generally too busy to do this.

Paul Davies: Did Franklin fulfill this function on *Patrick*?

Everett De Roche: Yes. Richard and I are working on another project (*Road Games*) and even though he is on some island in Fiji, he rings me up by radio telephone every second day. He can't stand to be left out.

Paul Davies: You said that one of the things that went wrong with *Long Weekend* was that the couple is doomed. Yet *Snapshot* starts with a remarkable scene where any number of things could be happening, and up until the end one still doesn't know who is going to burn up in the room…?

Everett De Roche: The premise of a girl being pursued by a killer isn't strong enough nowadays, especially if the audience knows everything is going to turn out okay. So the idea of the flash-forward in *Snapshot* was to warn the viewer that there might not be a happy ending. This then set up an atmosphere of suspense. It was a bit of a cheat of course, because that wasn't her you saw in the beginning.

Paul Davies: Was Chris de Roche's contribution largely in the development of Angela's character?

Everett De Roche: Yes, Chris gave me a lot of feedback on how to write from a female point of view.

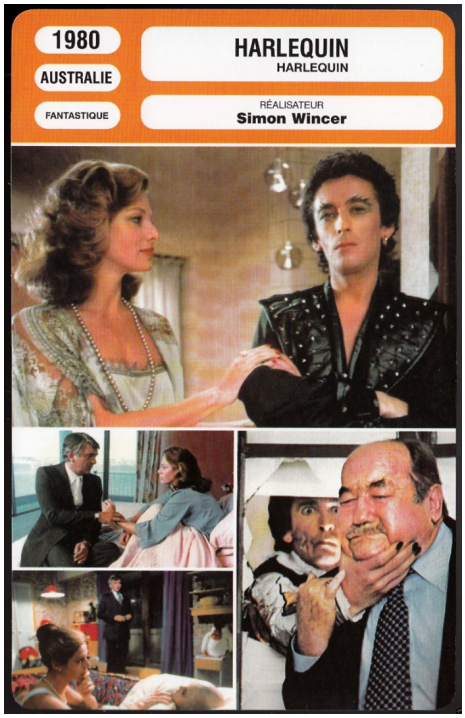
Paul Davies: Do you intend on working with Chris again?

Everett De Roche: I am continually using Chris as a sounding board. By giving her a credit on *Snapshot* I was acknowledging her continuing contribution. As far as other collaborations go I am working at the moment with Peter Pinny, which I am really enjoying.

Paul Davies: Is this for a feature.

Everett De Roche: No for a television series. But we are not sure what is going to happen, as it is horrendously expensive. Peter has written a number of novels, and I think he is probably the best Australian adventure writer. The novel we are adapting is based on the life of Frank Jardine who opened up the Cape York area in an attempt to turn it into another Singapore. It's a good novel but I am beginning to see the difficulties of adapting a novel to the screen. The script doesn't capture what is there in the book. That is partially because Peter writes good prose, and prose has nothing to do with scriptwriting.

Paul Davies: How did the *Harlequin* script come about?



Everett De Roche: I wrote a treatment on spec called *The Minister's Magician*. I showed it to Simon, to Tony Ginnane and Bill Fayman, who commissioned the screenplay. It went through several drafts before everyone was happy. I then went off to Mexico and when I returned the story had been altered to remove the religious element.

Paul Davies: Why was that?

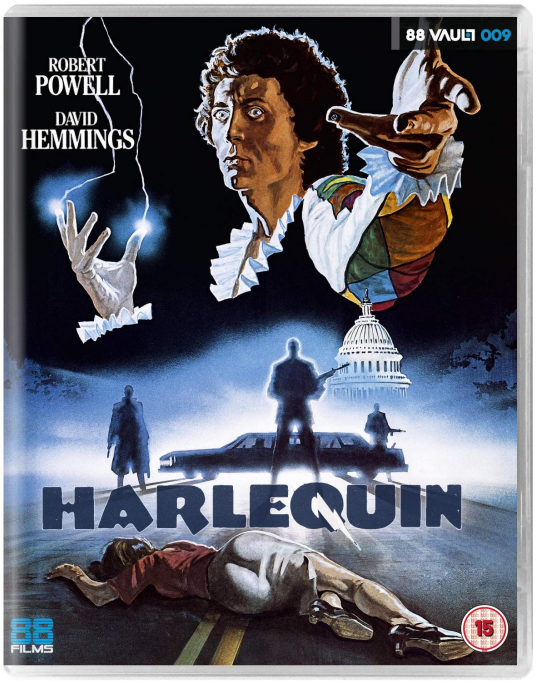
Everett De Roche: Marketing reasons. Certain overseas investors apparently had cold feet at the idea of a priest who behaves like Father Flanagan. Also the title was changed. Titles with variations on the word "magic" are a poor risk according to market research. I am told.

Paul Davies: How do you feel about alterations made by the producers?

Everett De Roche: How I feel doesn't matter. The producer pays his money, which gives him the right to use the script for dunny paper if he wants. Any scriptwriter who worries excessively about what happens to his scripts after they leave the typewriter is doomed to chronic depression. However, if alterations have to be made I would rather do them myself.

Paul Davies: Was your involvement with Wincer different from that on *Snapshot* ?

Everett De Roche: Yes, very different. The story for *Snapshot* was more or less handed to us on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, whereas *Harlequin* was a story we both cared about, and wanted to do.



Paul Davies: How close is the Rasputin connection?

Everett De Roche: With the religious factor removed, there is almost no connection, which is a great pity. Religion and politics are an historically volatile duo. Czar Nicholas II would have undoubtedly given Rasputin the boot at the outset had his wife not believed him to be "a man of God". I hope audiences don't boot out Harlequin for the same reason. But certain similarities survive. Rasputin cured Alexander of haemophilia; Wolfe cures Alex of leukaemia. In the ending Wolfe's murder is an exact paraphrase of Rasputin's. After being shot several times and dumped in a river Rasputin – according to an autopsy report – in fact died of drowning.

Paul Davies: Is your interpretation of Rasputin along conventional lines, or is it based on new research: e.g. Colin Wilson's book ? (*Rasputin and the Fall of the Romanovs*)

Everett De Roche: Like most legendary figures, the myths about Rasputin have survived the truth. But I didn't set out to retell the Rasputin story. What I wanted to do was show that things have changed very little, and that a modern religious-faith healer could still accomplish what Rasputin accomplished. Yes Wilson's books were helpful.

Paul Davies: Who determined that the country in the film is unspecified, and why?

Everett De Roche: The producers, presumably on the grounds the film would appeal to a broader audience. Tony (Ginnane) and I disagree on this. Perhaps he is right – he is the authority on world markets. He is the one who has to deal with the type of mentality that insisted that *Patrick* be dubbed from English into American. I think it's absurd. But I am only the writer.

Paul Davies: Is your dialogue also non-Australian?

Everett De Roche: Yes. Again, if concessions have to be made to flog the film overseas I'd rather make them myself than leave them to some butcher in an American dubbing studio. It's ironic that for years I had to be careful not to use any Americanisms in my Crawfords scripts. Nowadays I have to substitute "windshield" for "windscreen" and "elevator" for "lift" etc.

Paul Davies: What is happening with *Yankee Zephyr*?

Everett De Roche: Richard (Franklin) is working at Columbia and is tied up with other projects. There is a first draft of the script but neither of us is satisfied with it. The script is based on the true story of an American military cargo plane (a DC3) which is reported lost while carrying the payroll for the South Pacific fleet. The plane was actually found a few years later by a pearl diver, but I have pretended it hasn't been found and that there is a race to find it. A lot of different parties are all breaking their necks to get up to Cape York, to salvage this money. At this stage we haven't decided whether it's to be a land or underwater salvage. Filming underwater presents a lot of problems unless you have a large tank. All we have is an outline and the vague idea of making it a romp in the tradition of *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad World.*

Paul Davies: Are you planning to use Cape York as the location?

Everett De Roche: It hasn't been decided. Richard and I did a reconnaissance up there a few years ago, and I am not sure it has all that much to offer which couldn't be found a lot closer to home. I was expecting dense jungle and tropical beaches, but much of it is the same as elsewhere.

Paul Davies: Is your collaboration with Franklin similar to that on *Patrick* ?

Everett De Roche: With *Patrick* there was a fairly complete draft of the script before I became associated with Richard; he then suggested improvements and changes. With *Yankee Zephyr* Richard is much more involved in the initial scripting.

Paul Davies: David Hemmings said his involvement would mean some control over its international marketability…

Everett De Roche: I believe he would be looking for a story that wouldn't depend on it being exclusively Australian – that is a story that could be told in any part of the world. The only thing Australian about the incident is that it happened here, and that Cape York is a fairly unique place because it is possible for a plane to have crashed there and remain undiscovered for 40 years.

Paul Davies: Hemmings has also said that the international market *is* the U.S. As an ex-Californian, do you feel you are uniquely placed to understand that market?

Everett De Roche: I hope so. On the whole, American films are blatantly commercial and make no bones about the fact that they are out to make money. I basically agree with that approach Film *is* a commercial medium.

Paul Davies: And with a budget of $3.5 million, one doesn't have much option.

Everett De Roche: That's right. Unless you are a Spielberg, no one is going to take lot of risks with a big budget. That would mean, I suppose, getting American leads and that sort of thing.

Paul Davies: What are your feelings about co-productions?

Everett De Roche: If they allow us to keep making films, I think it's all for the good. Certainly there should be room for completely indigenous films a well.

Paul Davies: How important is the budget to you? Do you often feel there are things you would like to have done but couldn't?

Everett De Roche: If I were given a multi-million dollar budget, I think I would know what to do with it. Usually, a writer is very aware of budgets before the script even comes off the typewriter.

Paul Davies: All your scripts are contemporary – almost aggressively so. Now you are doing a film that goes back to World War II. Is this a new direction for you ?

Everett De Roche: No because *Yankee Zephyr* is a contemporary film. The crash occurred during the war, but we are picking it up 40 years later. I have nothing against doing period films. It's just that I started writing film scripts at a time when there was a lot of period stuff around. I wanted contemporary to be different. Perhaps I also feel more comfortable with it.

Paul Davies: Is this because you can more easily relate your experience to the present?

Everett De Roche: Not really. Once I have chosen a story I then decide whether it's best told in a contemporary or period setting, and whether it's best as a feature, telefeature or episode of a television series.

Paul Davies: What are the opportunities for a writer in Australia at the moment?

Everett De Roche: There are plenty of opportunities for personal expression, even if you have to sneak it under the door. You can even say what you want in the most restricted television series.

Paul Davies: Presumably the opportunities for this would be greater in films?

Everett De Roche: That's what I thought before I got into films.

Paul Davies: Does a writer have to be self-effacing to function?

Everett De Roche: We all work differently, but a degree of self-isolation works for me. I don't like being too close to a subject, and when I am doing research I don't like anybody to know I am a writer.

Paul Davies: In *Patrick, Long Weekend* and *Snapshot* a De Roche style seems to be emerging – your obsession with water or the mystery/thriller format. Are you aware of such things?

Everett De Roche: I am, though I don't wish to be locked into any particular style. The suspense/thriller just happens to be a popular type of film at present.

Paul Davies: There is also a degree of romance and comedy in your films…

Everett De Roche: I like putting comedy into drama, but I am scared of doing straight comedy. It's hard to be funny. If you put a shock into a film, people will jump out of their seats - or they won't. And if they don't it's not a disaster. But unless you're getting laughs all the time in a comedy it's a turkey. I've never done a comedy of the Neil Simon style, but I'd love to.

Paul Davies: The comedy in *Long Weekend* is very black.

Everett De Roche: I am certainly more comfortable with black comedy. Essentially I'm a cynic.

Paul Davies: The central characters in *Patrick, Long Weekend* and *Snapshot* are all doomed to a certain extent. It is as if they have broken some moral code and are condemned. Patrick has murdered his mother; Angela seeks success at any price; Peter and Marcia are doomed because of their aggression towards the Bush. Is this part of your cynicism?

Everett De Roche: Yes. I would find it hard to create a lead character who is the typical hero or heroine; someone who behaves impeccably. I am more comfortable working with characters who have faults and pimples, who are human like the rest of us.

Paul Davies: You also concentrate on characters in the 20 to 30 age group.

Everett De Roche: I am more comfortable writing in my own age group, but there is no hard and fast rule. Sometimes I write a character who is either old, or vey young, but production or casting difficulties force me to rewrite the character in to this age group.

Paul Davies: I wondered if there wasn't something more to it. In all your films the older people prey on the younger. One thinks of Madeline in *Snapshot,* or Dr. Roget in *Patrick* …

Everett De Roche: I am not conscious of this, and I leave it to others to figure out what it all means. Most of the time a story writes itself; I can't say I have a lot of control over it.

Paul Davies: How conscious are you of structure when writing? One of the sustaining strengths of *Patrick* for example is its manipulation of suspense…

Everett De Roche: When I did the original draft I wasn't really aware of such things, and when Richard took over, he actually charted the story. He had a scale of one to 10, and would say, "This shock is work maybe three, and the next one's five. We have a gap there, so I nee another shock. Make it worth four.

Paul Davies: Are you going through a similar process on *Yankee Zephyr*?

Everett De Roche: We are working with stunts, rather than shocks, with each stunt bigger than the last. This happens to suit the story nicely, because the closer you get to the treasure, the more difficult the terrain, the bigger the obstacles.

Paul Davies: Is it important to have a good technical knowledge, such as how shots are put together?

Everett De Roche: It can be an advantage and a handicap. It's certainly important to get out once in a while an find out what the practical difficulties are.

Paul Davies: How is it a handicap?

Everett De Roche: It may inhibit you from writing a sequence the way you want to because you're thinking that it would mean an early shoot for the crew and so on. You shouldn't think about such things; only about the story.

Paul Davies: At what stage do you show an idea to somebody else?

Everett De Roche: That is the hardest thing to decide. Do you show it at an undeveloped stage and take a chance on the director being able to understand what you're doing, or do you polish it and only give him your best shot? I tend to get anxious, and need a stamp of approval to keep going. But if someone says they don't like it, I can get discouraged and feel tempted to throw away a potentially good idea.

Paul Davies: What would your influences be as a writer?

Everett De Roche: That's a hard one because I'm not a film buff. I suppose there have been influences, but I am not aware of them. Recently I was one of the judges at a film festival, and I saw more films then than I had in my lifetime.

Paul Davies: Did it give you any perspective on Australian films in relation to global filmmaking?

Everett De Roche: My only criticism is that we are a little self-conscious at present. Ours is an adolescent industry. It's afraid of people laughing about it. It has to take more chances.

Paul Davies: Australian scripts are often criticized for being underworked. Are writers prepared to do the redrafting?

Everett De Roche: It's not a matter of not being prepared, but of not being able to afford it. If the Australian Film Commission pays $3000 for a script it gets a $3000 script. If an American studio wants a $100,000 script, then you write one. What these various producers are buying is time, and $3000 only buys a certain amount. My family and I can exist for X amount of time for $3000, and after that I can't afford to keep working on it.

Paul Davies: How important is the reaction of critics?

Everett De Roche: The things I have seen written on *Patrick* , good and bad, I have agreed with 100 percent.

Paul Davies: Would critics make good script editors?

Everett De Roche: Not necessarily, because the critic can stand back and criticize without having to offer positive alternatives. A good script editor has to be able to criticize *and* come up with ways to improve it; not many people can do that. One thing Richard and I did on *Patrick* was to have Tom Ryan, a film critic and friend of Richard's, read the script. Tom pointed out certain things we had cheated on.

Paul Davies: In *Patrick* you appear as an electrician, and in *Snapshot* as a forensic expert. Would you like to act?

Everett De Roche: No. I like to go along for two or three days to watch the filming, but it's boring if you're not involved. The writer is the odd man out on the set, and if you are doing something, like working as an extra, you feel more a part of it.

Paul Davies: What percentage of your projects are unproduced?

Everett De Roche: Most of my failures have been television pilots. I write a lot of them – last year I did six. One guy even paid me out of his pocket because he believed in his project so much. Then it goes to a Network which says "yes" or "no" and that decision could well depend on what the executives had for breakfast. Often you feel "Jesus, if they'd only take a punt, the would see that this is going to work". There are so many things that could be done on television but aren't. It's very frustrating.

Paul Davies: Once you said the future of film-making was in television. What did you mean?

Everett De Roche: The hardest thing in film-making is to get people off their bums and into a cinema. However, the technology we now have means you no longer have to do this. If you can put a two-metre television screen into your living room and can dial a film, why would you want to pay to go to a cinema? Now this doesn't mean we won't be making films; just won't be making films for cinemas. It'll be like Home Box Office in the U.S., where people pay to see first-run films on cable television. I might be wrong, but it seems all this will increase the demand incredibly. I see less than six films a year, which is terrible for a scriptwriter, but if films were being piped into my home, I'd probably see 40. The rest of the population would do the same. The big difference this will mean in Australia is that people will have to pay to see some television shows. Up till now, television has more or less been free, as long as you put up with the ads. But people are becoming increasingly fed up with ads, and it has reached the point overseas where people are willing to pay money *not* to see them.

Paul Davies: It will obviously bring about a great many changes to television…

Everett De Roche: At the moment, television is aimed at the lowest common denominator. Dialogue has to be written so that a child can understand it, and the plots are constructed so that somebody can take a leak in the middle and not miss much. Now, if you have the selectivity of cable television, you have to win your audience. They are not just watching because you are there.

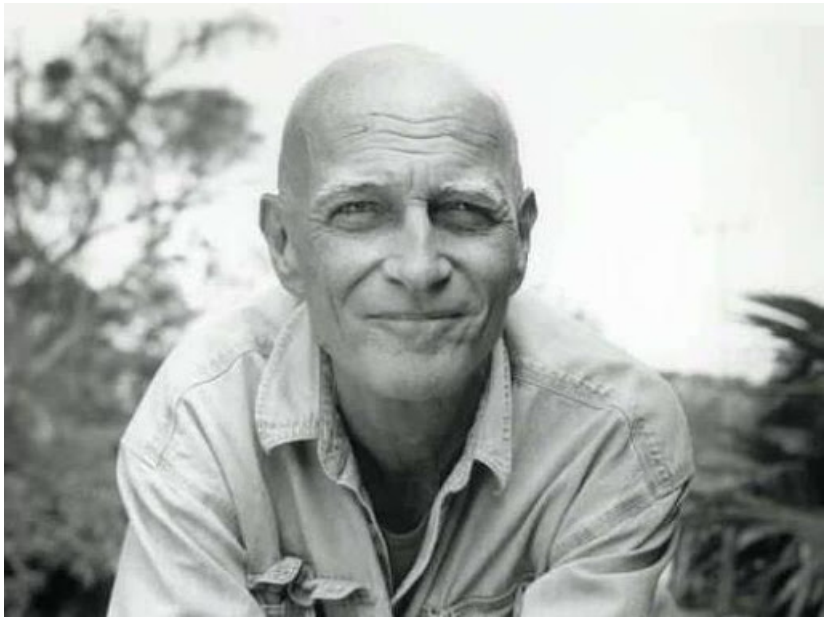
Paul Davies: What changes will this bring to the type of films we are making?

Everett De Roche: In Australian it is probably quite difficult to get money to make a film about homosexuals, draft dodgers or Aboriginals. Films have to be so broad

in appeal that hopefully every man, woman, and child in the country will want to see it. But by having the selectivity of a Home Box Office situation, where you can dial whatever you want to see, it can become economically feasible to have a broad selection of material.

Paul Davies: You have also said that the television industry in Australia was healthier than in the U.S. Have you changed that view since your recent trip to the U.S.?

Everett De Roche: No. It's been confirmed even more. Australia probably has the best television in the world, and that is because we only see the best American and British shows. And the local shows – love them or leave them – have to compete with these top shows, and they usually hold their own. In the U.S. I found television, other than cable, really dull. The only exception was late night television, like *The Johnnie Carson Show* and *Saturday Night Live.* They really push comedy and good taste to the limit. I am sure there are plenty of Americans who are capable of being a lot funnier or dramatic than they are at present. It's not that they don't have creative people – after all they make some of the best films in the world – it's just that something is holding them back. I don't know what it is.



Everett de Roche (circa 2012)

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