

JAWS



Steven Spielberg told

producer Richard Zanuck that what first attracted him to Peter Benchley's novel was the last 120 pages, when three disparate men go on a sea hunt, then must join forces to fight the shark. He hated the first 200 pages: "I said I'd like to do the picture if I could change the first two acts and base (them) on original screenplay material and then be very true to the book for the last third. (Zanuck) agreed and that's how I became involved."



Benchley wrote three drafts of the screenplay before telling Spielberg: "I'm all written out on this, and that's the best I can do." (With no hard feelings, Benchley returned during filming to play a small onscreen role as a TV reporter.)

Unhappy with the way the script was progressing, Spielberg asked Carl Gottlieb, friend and one-time pitch partner (they shared the same agent), to take a look at the script and choose a character he would like to play. Gottlieb, an Emmy-winning comedy writer and at the time a creative consultant on *The Odd Couple*, chose the newspaperman Meadows. He and



Spielberg discussed the script at length over lunches (often sushi!). Nothing formal, just one friend helping another. Then, eleven days before the start of production, Gottlieb was called in to the producers office and offered the job. Two days later he and Spielberg flew to Martha's Vineyard with a script that had never even been through a final rewrite. Spielberg had pushed hard to get him. Now Gottlieb was in the frying pan.

Soon, Gottlieb was in a routine. He and Spielberg studied the story over dinner with members of the cast and crew to decide what would go into the film, then spend the night writing, often finishing a scene the night before it was shot. During the day he was "acting, waiting to act, watching others act, or writing."



One problem that Gottlieb was saddled with was how to write for his character, Meadows. If he pressed too hard for Meadows in the story meetings, it could look like favoritism. If he cut a line of Meadows, the actor inside of him would just die. But worse is what happened when he and Spielberg decided to cut Meadows out of a whole scene.

In the scene, Meadows rides to sea with Hooper and Brody looking for shark evidence when they come upon a local fisherman's wrecked boat. During the shot, Meadows reaches for the battered boat to pull it closer. On the third take, he reaches too far and falls into the water. This is freezing early-May water in the Nantucket Sound, about 50° F, and Gottlieb is wearing two pair of long underwear to keep him warm on the boat. Once pulled aboard, he is given soup and dry clothes and finishes the scene. Later that night, at one of their dinner story sessions, it's agreed that Meadows shouldn't be there at all and that the scene would play scarier if it took place at night. Talk about adding insult to injury. ■

JOE ALVES – Production Designer

Joe was recruited by Disney Studios animated special effects department right out of school. He later moved to Universal Studios art department and rose through the ranks as a set designer, art director, and production designer. He designed three features for Steven Spielberg: *The Sugarland Express*, *Jaws*, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (for which he received an Oscar® nomination). Joe, who was involved with *Jaws* even before Spielberg, also designed the mechanical shark, drew storyboards and sketches, and, while location scouting, even discovered Martha's Vineyard to be the perfect seaside retreat to shoot their movie. ■



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SHORT SUBJECT

Captain Hareblower

is one of the classic match ups between Bugs Bunny and Yosemite Sam – here renamed Pirate Sam. In this short, we get a chance to see director, Isadore "Friz" Freleng and the Warner Bros. cartoon staff at the top of their form, timing an beautifully animated, escalating series of gags into a crescendo of disaster for the roughest, toughest, he-man stuffiest hombre as ever crossed the seven seas. Print courtesy of Warner Bros. (1954).

Coming Events

Saturday, **October 27, 2012** at 2 & 8 pm only



Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man

is regarded by many to be the last of the first-tier Universal monster features. From an atmospheric opening sequence in a graveyard to the discovery of the Monster frozen in a block of ice in the catacombs of Frankenstein's castle, the film is a showcase for the production values that make these films so memorable. The plots of *The Wolf Man* and *The Ghost of Frankenstein* converge as the Wolf Man (Larry Talbot, once again played by Lon Chaney Jr.), continues his quest for

inner peace – through death. His search for the writings of the famous Dr. Frankenstein eventually leads him to the Baroness Elsa Frankenstein (Ilona Massey) and the Creature (Bela Lugosi). Cast also includes Maria Ouspenskaya and Dwight Frye. Directed by Roy William Neill, who went on to direct many installments of the Sherlock Holmes series. Universal (1943).

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