



Richard Bayard Miller

Rich represents the “male” point of view on Films for Two (FF2), and provides the balance needed to assure that FF2 fulfills its promise as “The Online Guide for Busy Couples.”

There are movies in every genre that are good, movies that both men and women should see.

Our goal with FF2 is to help the public make their own choices about what to watch together.

We recommend films that we believe both men and women will find worthy of their time and attention.

Rich Miller, Co-Owner with Jan Lisa Huttner of Films for Two (www.films42.com)

There was no reason to believe Rich Miller’s interest in the film industry would lead him to launch a website – one that would give him a national voice as a “movie critic.”

Rich caught the movie bug when he attended Oberlin College in Ohio, where he graduated with high honors in Philosophy. After graduation, Rich headed to the University of Chicago where he was immersed in studying for his PhD in Philosophy, while also serving in the Marine Corps Reserve.

During his second year at the U of C, on “*one fateful day in March*,” as Rich describes it, “*I went to the Philosophy Department Office to pick up my mail. A young woman was standing at the door looking lost and bewildered. She had come for an interview, but the professor who was supposed to interview her was ‘running late’.*”

That young woman was Jan Lisa Huttner, and that day would change both of their lives forever. “By the following summer, we were a *couple*, and a few years later we got married.”

But professionally reviewing movies still was not on Rich’s radar – nor on Jan’s.

Rich finished his PhD dissertation in 1983, but there were few teaching positions available, so he completed a “Careers in Business” course at New York University and then returned to Chicago to study accounting. He completed an MBA at the Keller Graduate School of Management and acquired a CPA while moving up the business ladder at the University of Chicago Medical Center – where he is currently Vice President for Finance.

So why does someone with a PhD in Philosophy, an MBA, a CPA, and a successful career in finance, start professionally reviewing movies? Jan and Rich describe themselves as “a hard-working *baby-boomer couple*, with great educations, and lots of family and social obligations.” Like many couples, during their free time, they enjoyed watching movies together, and – like many couples – Jan and Rich often made their choices based on reviews.

As a John Ford fan for many years, Rich’s film experience leaned more towards movies that were “exciting.” Like *Mission Impossible*, *The Man who Shot Liberty Valance*, and *The Matrix*. “Movies that are

more like watching a sporting event. Not exactly the way you should feel coming out of *Jane Eyre* or *Pride & Prejudice*,” he says.

On the other hand, Jan focused on narrative – how the individual elements of a film serve the narrative. Her view is, “If the narrative is weak, then no matter how great the cinematography is, the film itself is a failure.”

But choosing which films to see during the “free time” of this busy couple was only one part of their movie-going experience. The second part was going somewhere afterwards to eat and argue. Their opinions often differed on just about everything: the plot, the characters, the script, and even the costumes and cinematography.

It was fun to hash it all out, and they began sharing their experiences with friends – who started asking this team of two for recommendations. Rich understood Jan’s point of view, recognizing from his philosophy background that how people process a reasonably complex piece of information depends on their history. While he still enjoys the excitement of an on-screen adventure, he also looks at films using his intellectual background, with an educated eye.

One thing lead to another and on Valentine’s Day in 2002, Rich and Jan launched *Films for Two – The Online Guide for Busy Couples*. Their primary focus is to speak to both men and women, to help couples make their own choices about what to watch together. The private arguments about what Jan and Rich each liked and didn’t like about film are crafted into 50-word summaries of which films this team thought were worthwhile: Not necessarily romantic, although some of them are. And not necessarily action-packed, although some of them are. Rich and Jan recommend films for adults, films that they believe both men and women will find worthy of their time and attention.

Rich describes their process this way: “There are good movies in every genre that all people, men and women, should see. Then there are genres where a guy might enjoy the average film more, just as there are films that might be enjoyed more by a woman.

While I am better at predicting which films my guy friends will like better – my academic background in

Continued...



Rich Miller

philosophy has also made me more astute about which films might also appeal to women.

What do moviegoers look for when watching a film?

"There are three kinds of things you look at when watching a film," Rich says.

. The **First** consideration is cultural or generational. "My generation of guys can quote *The Godfather* at the drop of a hat, the way my dad's generation could quote *Casablanca*."

. The **Second** way to look at a film is more technical. One example of *technical* is the effect on moviegoers of the Computer Generated Images (CGI) used to create the Andy Serkis character "Caesar" in *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. Another technical example is the actual craft of filmmaking and acting, as shown by the performance of Meryl Streep in *Iron Lady*. Even if you do not like the movie, you might appreciate Streep's portrayal of Margaret Thatcher.

. **Third** is how a movie affects you personally. For example, you might be influenced by what you expect because of a movie review, or by how a particular character reminds you of a loved one.

Rich feels Movie Reviews have a lot to do with the way a movie is perceived. Because of the initial reviews, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* had a very slow audience response. But when more people voiced their opinions, the film realized a second life.

How do you describe your role in Films for Two? "Our voice is distinct because it represents OUR voices – Jan's **and** mine. It's not just a *male* point of view, nor Jan's *feminist* point of view. It is a *joint* point of view designed to identify films that couples can enjoy together. That's why we call it *Films for Two*, with emphasis on the TWO."

For more information and to interview Rich,
Contact Marion E. Gold Marketing & Communications
480-247-2621 or gold@powercom.net