

EE British Academy Film Awards in 2013 – Winner's Acceptance Speech: BAFTA Fellowship Award

ALAN PARKER: Thank you. Thanks.

God, this is incredibly flattering.

When it was first mooted that I might get this award, I thought about what I might say and -- anyway, ten years went by, so -- Russell Crowe has written me a poem. It will only be cut out.

When you're halfway through your first film, you are certain that it's surely going to be your last, and then you kind of blink and 40 years have gone by and you've made 14 films. It's quite a surprise, really. But you always know you are going to get there. It's like however hard it is on the movie, you know, if you squeeze your eyes together you are always going to get to the wrap party, even if you think you are never going to.

When I was a little boy, I was aged about ten at my junior school and had been to see Jack Palance and Jeff Chandler in Sign of the Pagan, it was called. And the next day I came back and I divided the entire playground into Romans and Huns, and then, although I didn't actually say "Action", I did give the command for the Huns to attack the Romans, who were defending the outside toilets. The resultant bloodshed, which was quite considerable, meant I was before the headmaster, and the head master said, "Why Parker? Why? Why?" If I had known then that I was going to get this, I could have really shut him up.

I just will be very brief, my mentor, the great Fred Zimmerman who used to critique each of my films, not always kindly, said to me that -- he said, "It's a great privilege to be a director; don't waste it". Hopefully, over this last 40 years, some of the time I didn't waste it. Thank you BAFTA, thank you everyone.

(End of acceptance speech)