

BAFTA David Lean Lecture: David O Russell
19 December 2015 at Princess Anne Theatre, BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, London

Francine Stock: Ladies and gentlemen, good evening and welcome to the 2015 David Lean Lecture, to be delivered by David O Russell. And BAFTA would like to thank the David Lean Foundation as ever for supporting, the support that makes this event possible. Now after the lecture there will be a Q&A, so there will be a chance for you to put your questions to David, and so that, do bear in mind that that will be happening shortly afterwards. Now the best cinema it seems to me is actually the one that defies description, you simply have to experience it. So before we welcome David O Russell to the stage, here is just a reminder of some of his films.

[Clip plays]

[Applause]

Ladies and gentlemen will you please welcome to the stage the 2015 David Lean lecturer, David O Russell.

[Applause]

David O Russell: Thank you for that. Is this an actual microphone? No it isn't. Is this on? Is this working? Okay. Thank you all for coming out. It's, if I told you how sincerely grateful I am to be here, I think it's in the British spirit to, I don't know, to not take me at my word, but I am sincerely grateful to be here. So much so that I'm more nervous than I've been in a long time. That's a good thing. I think nervousness is a good sign that you're going to show up and something interesting's going to happen. I'm happy tonight to be here, I'm grateful to be here, I'm grateful to carry the banner for the cinema we've been making really since *The Fighter*, and *Silver Linings*, and *American Hustle*, and now *Joy*, which is the banner of salt of the Earth, ordinary people who become extraordinary in some way. And God let me know that was the cinema I was intended to make, just at the last minute as I was in my 40s. And I guess there's a quote I would take from Jean-Paul Sartre to sound pretentious, but also he's a smart guy. So he said, "We only become what we are by the radical refusal of that of which others have made of us," and I would say that's true of every single character I'm inspired to write about, and it's true

of my own story, in the world and in life, and it's my advice to my own children.

As a storyteller, here's the door we're going to enter right now. Okay, we're going to have a door we enter and a door we leave, just like in a movie, in this talk. The door we go through is of me in character in David Lean when I was seven years old, okay. I'm lucky this happened to me because it's a good doorway tonight, it's real. It was the first experience I had watching a big movie on a big screen, and it happened when my second grade friend, Eddie Jaffe, his mother took us to an afternoon film at a giant auditorium in a giant place, everything was giant, it didn't belong there, it was giant. And we went into this giant place, and it was a film, it was not a kid's film, it was a giant black and white film that was a scary film.

It began with a boy, not very different in age from me, and that boy was running outside at night, in black and white he was running home trying to get to supper. A boy who hears the large and strange sounds of the frightening world. A boy who's confronted by a man, a strange man with a scarred face and chains. A man tells the boy, go get him some food, the boy runs home and he steals the food from his family's dinner. They had my attention. I mean this movie was not *Mary Poppins*, and it had my full attention. The boy sneaks home, he steals the dinner, he runs back to the man in chains who's outside at night. It's a mysterious act of trust and kindness on behalf of the boy, isn't it? It's a blessing. He's scared, he really shouldn't trust this man or do anything for this man, but he's guided by some other kindness inside of him. And it's a kindness and a blessing that will come back to him, and that's a kindness and blessing that also inspires my cinema, as much as the realness and the ordinariness that becomes extraordinary, it's the blessings that surprise us which are a mystery.

I was absolutely mesmerised by this giant black and white film and I never forgot it. The title's name, was so big, the word, I couldn't remember the word when I got home. My mother said, "Well what did you do?" I said, "Mrs. Jaffe took us to a movie." She said, "What was the name

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of the movie? Where was it?" I said, "I don't know, it was a giant place, a very big place." She says, "Was it the local theatre?" I said, "No. It was a very big place." She said, "What was the movie?" I said, "It was a big word." She said, "What was the word?" I said, here I said the biggest word I could remember. "It was called Astronomy," I said. She said, "That was the name of the movie? Astronomy?" I said, "Yeah." And she left it at that. I couldn't remember what it meant. And many years later I, twenty years later probably, I found out that the movie, the word was not Astronomy, it was *Expectations*, a word I'd neither understood or could say when I was seven, and the name of the movie was *Great Expectations*.

And it's a magnificent work of art that I've watched innumerable times, by David Lean, Sir David Lean. I just want to, while he's dead in heaven, I believe in honouring the dead and our ancestors, including my own, and I'm going to honour David Lean, Sir David Lean right now in the brotherhood and sisterhood of cinema. That movie hit me and it never let go of me when I was seven years old. It's about a boy who becomes a man, who loves a girl that's unattainable, whose name is Estella like the stars that are unattainable. And he knows a woman who lives in an old wedding dress because she's remained frozen in time and given up on life. That would become a fundamental question of every single movie I've made, especially in the last five or six years: people who could remain frozen in time and give up on life, or could somehow find a second act, could somehow find a way to reinvent themselves and re-love life again, which ain't easy. Life is not easy, I make no mistake about that, having lived it myself.

And my own life with England and the BAFTAs would more properly be titled, 'No Expectations', because I consider myself a populist filmmaker, and my only beacon when I was a young writer and man was to go to Sundance. Thank goodness for Robert Redford, I met and found my first wife there, my first divorce as well, and my first son, who later inspired my film called *Silver Linings Playbook*, because he was born with

numerous issues. You know, part of the mystery of life is you don't know what to expect, and when we came over here with *Silver Linings Playbook*, I had never thought I would have ever in a million years come to London, for some reason I had a preconception of London, which was wrong, as so many preconceptions are. And I never thought, I thought, "Well London, they must only like sort of you know Merchant Ivory films. Or you know, or maybe the films like *My Beautiful Laundrette*, but they had to be British, they had to have that accent.

And I was stunned that I was honoured with an Original Screenplay award for *Silver Linings Playbook*. It knocked me out. Because again, I say my cinema is a popular cinema, I despise pretense, and very often in our business the more art, art is considered pretense, or suffering is considered art. And I will argue in the United Nations General Assembly against that. I will say that art need not be pure suffering, and just because you make me suffer more doesn't mean it's more art. And I would say that, as George Lucas said, he's a guy, I think he's responsible for something that's happening this month, some annoying film that's competing with us. He said, "Listen you want me to make you feel? It's not hard to make you feel. I'll wring a kitten's neck; I will make you feel something. That ain't hard. What's hard is to show you beauty, humanity, enchantment, and emotion and suffering." And that's my flag, even though I'll probably never make a movie remotely like *Star Wars*, I am the movie of regular people.

Another funny story about the year we went there for *Silver Linings*, I was sitting next to Jennifer Lawrence, and just became famous for the face I made. I wasn't used to being on live television, and there was a screen-grab some of you may be familiar with when they announced the winner that year. And I believed in my young actress, the minute they announced someone else, someone from France, I reacted as a loyal father and director to my actress. I made a face, and as I made the face my wife said, "Wait a second, you're on TV." And right in that shot right there you can see, here's the camera, here's

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Jennifer, there's my wife pointing, and here's me in the middle going... And this became a screen-grab known as 'David O. Russell doucheface', which you can find on Google. Don't Google anybody. But 'doucheface', really to me it was 'loyal director loves actress face'. Empathises and supports and would do anything for actress. And God bless the French lady who won.

Oh by the way, the giant place where I saw the movie, in terms of the mystery of life, was the high school I would end up going to. And for me it was just beyond scale, which is again testament to the magic of time, the magic of location, and perspective. And the world is a very wonderful and large and amazing place. The actual world, I'm not talking about the virtual world, I'm talking about the actual world. I'm going to stick with the actual world. I'll go down, I'll be John Huston with the oxygen tube in my nose like he was on his last set walking around, but I'll be making movies in the actual world. And there's room at the table for many cinemas, and I welcome them all and I love them all. But I represent the banner for the actual world and the real people in it, and I would quote Yeats here saying, "The world is full of magical things patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper." And that is what we try to do in our cinema, that's what we're trying to do.

And every character faces the turning point in their lives of either being kind like the little boy was in *Great Expectations*, and finding a blessing, or giving up and being frozen like Miss Havisham, or becoming bitter and ugly. That's what every single picture is about that we've done in the last six years; being broken-hearted, but picking up and finding a way to do it again, to keep going. I don't know how any human faces any day, I've faced that moment many times in my life, most prominently when my first marriage ended, when my first son was diagnosed with many disorders, when my promising life as a filmmaker lost its way like a car suddenly lost its headlights, a map, and I didn't even have control of the steering wheel anymore. I was officially diagnosed with the syndrome that can happen to anybody, especially writers or directors,

it's called 'Head Up Your Ass Syndrome'.

And you know I first noticed it when Darren Aronofsky who was the original director of *The Fighter*, who was to make it with Brad Pitt and Matt Damon, who came up to me afterwards and said, "Wow man, the script you recrafted had nothing to do with the one Darren was going to do." And all I can tell you is the women became the secret the that movie with me, as well as the love. And God bless Darren, he's a brilliant filmmaker, and he came up and sat on my lap at a director's roundtable, which was his way of saying it was okay that I'd made that film. And he meanwhile had made a film, he'd come back from the brink of disaster, he'd made a film called *The Wrestler*, and then he'd made a film called *Black Swan* that I thought was very beautiful. And I said, "What happened to you man, look at you?" And he said, "I got my head out of my ass." And what that means to me is you should never get too concerned with yourself, and anytime I've become too concerned with myself has been the worst time of my life. And I would say, that's true of my bipolar son, and it's true of any filmmaker and any writer.

I would say the worst ten years of my life was the ten years I spent thinking too much about me and my ideas and judging me, and it's better to act from instinct and to come from pure instinct. And *The Fighter* was a script that was offered to me by my friend Mark Wahlberg, when in the math of Hollywood, I had helped pick him and risen him in a picture called *Three Kings*, and then he had risen higher than me. He had become a godfather with a series called *Entourage*, he was making pictures, and he gave me a break. And in the strange mystery that is Hollywood, or the world, and as my editor, Jay says, "If you want a friend in Hollywood, get a dog." And I think that applies to the world. I know, even though a person who had been one of my first believers, my first supporters, ran the studio that was going to make the film *The Fighter*, he declared, "Over my dead body will David O. Russell make that film." And this man of course now hugs me and embraces me and blesses me and loves me, and this is life and this is Hollywood.

So that gift was from Mark Wahlberg whom I had given a gift to. My son, whose issues have given me many a grey hair, and is now a fine young man with a healthy life, gave me a gift called... Oh, I was going to say about *The Fighter*, in my previous incarnation I never would have looked twice at *The Fighter*. I would have said, "Who cares? I don't get it. Who cares about these people? It's a junkie, it's a family, I don't care." I hadn't subscribed to the church of Yeats yet, of finding the blessings in the ordinary, I hadn't done that yet. And finally a voice of God said to me, "How about you just try to do this? Try to do it good. And good luck to you. And don't fuck it up." And so finding inspiration by digging deep happened in *The Fighter*, the same thing with *Silver Linings Playbook*.

I'm a working writer, I make my living as a writer. I pay my mortgage and my ex-wife's mortgage by writing, okay. So in those trouble years when I was treading water I was writing, and one of the writing assignments I took was from the late Sydney Pollack and the late Anthony Minghella, who said to me, "Could you adapt this book called *Silver Linings Playbook*?" And I said, "You know, I can kind of relate to this." I never would have looked at it twice if I hadn't experienced it myself, someone suffering with that disorder. And it brought me into contact with Robert De Niro, whom I'd known for many years but now we really connected, because Bob and I bonded over our children who'd faced these terrible troubles. And once you look in the eyes of someone who's faced these troubles, you're brothers, you're sisters, you're family.

I went to Congress that year to introduce a parity in mental health law, because in the United States we're trying to catch up with you, you can't get mental health treated like other healthcare, so God help the family that doesn't have the dollar to help their family member with a mental health problem. And I went and saw two senators, one was a Republican who despised government spending, and one was a Democrat who was trying to pass a bill to make parity in mental health. And I looked in the

conservative's eyes who didn't believe in government spending, and I knew he was a brother who had a family member, I just knew, and that's why he was there in spite of his party, he wanted to pass this bill, so that's a beautiful thing.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the making of *American Hustle* because I think it's a good cinema story about what directors go through. And after, we leapt from instinct, right out of *Silver Linings* I was writing *American Hustle*. And out of *American Hustle*, while we were in the editing room, you know Jennifer Lawrence was a girl who, Harvey Weinstein said, "She's too young to be in this film," *Silver Linings Playbook*. She auditioned on Skype at the last minute, and she just was ageless, she was timeless. And Harvey said, "She's too young, I want you to cast this person." I said, "May I come up, may I show you the Skype." He said, "Just send it to me." I said, "No, I need to show it to you in person." So I brought it up to New York from the Philadelphia location, I sat down with him and I put it in front of him on my laptop, and in 30 seconds of looking at her audition done from her father's room in Louisville, Kentucky, where she dressed up like the character, Harvey said, "Oh my God." And he saw what I saw in this young woman, who now has become a very magical person and dear friend in my life, who I met thanks to my son, thanks to a story, thanks to Anthony Minghella, thanks to Sydney Pollack who hired me to write that.

All these stories are about music and cinema, and that's why I love BAFTA. BAFTA is a location, BAFTA is a destination, BAFTA is a place. I love places, and I love places where I have to go to meet people. I have to go talk about things, it's a society. I like that. It's a tradition, it's a ritual. I like that. A song or a movie is a ritual, it's a narrative. It's when you're facing death or horror or the blue meanies, or you can't get up the next day, that's what puts your feet on the floor. That's what puts your feet on the floor. It's a piece of a movie, a piece of a song, and BAFTA's a part of that to me. BAFTA, I honour these things. And they're not just online, I come here and I have to meet the British people myself,

and I love that. And that allows me a little bit to keep going and tell the monsters and the demons to go fuck themselves, and to stand up again, which is what movies and music have done for my whole life.

So this is a funny story. So why would I make *American Hustle*? People say, "Why would you make a movie about a lady with a mop?" Well I don't, I didn't say, "Gosh, I've got to make a movie about a lady with a mop." I didn't say, "Gosh, I've got to make a movie about a boxer." I didn't say, "Gosh, I've got to make a movie about Abscam." Abscam was one of the, a very public scandal in our political life that I didn't particularly care about. As always I care about the people. The people, the people. The specificity of the people. Who are they? What music do they love? What food do they eat? How do they fall in love? How do they live? What makes them believe in life? That's what I want to make a movie about, and that's what I want to go watch a movie about. That exists in all my favourite cinema.

So Christian Bale says yeah, he wants to play the fat, Jewish guy who's bald, he really wants to do that. And Bradley Cooper says, "Okay, I'll play the FBI guy, but it seems kind of boring." I said, "It's not going to be boring when I get through with it." Amy Adams said, "Yeah, I want to play a character who plays three personalities and has a British accent but it's fake." And she pretends to be a British lady but really she's a working class girl from Albuquerque. And in the middle of this Christian Bale, as anybody can, has some family matters, and he says, "Well can we postpone this? You know, can we do this in a year or two?" I said "I'm sorry, I don't have *Batman* money and I can't do that, you know this is my living." So suddenly my life becomes a raging sea, and this is a director's story, okay. I audition for my actors. So I turn around to the studio, which has no script, they have an existing script, I say, "I'm not going to make that script. I'm going to rewrite that script, and I'm in the middle of rewriting it." I said, "But I will pitch you a trailer," and I pitched them the trailer. I believe they should hear the trailer as I see it, I'll play music with that and I'll act

it out for them.

So now I'm in the house suddenly, I said, "Bradley, how about you play the Irving character?" He goes, "I'm going to be the fat Jewish guy?" I go, "Yeah, you do that." And he goes, "Well who's going to be the FBI guy?" I go, "Jeremy Renner," and so Jeremy Renner becomes that guy, because he's been waiting to work with me, as I knew Amy Adams was waiting to work. Amy says, "I'm cool, keep going, it's okay, I'm going to stay the course." And now what happens is of course, Christian Bale's family situation changes and he says, "Can I come back?" Any director in this room knows what I'm talking about. I go, "Okay." And now suddenly I'm like Jeremy Renner in *The Hurt Locker* trying to diffuse a bomb. Because if I go back to, I go, "Bradley, would you..." He goes, "What you saying? You don't believe I could do this part?" "No, I believe you can do this part, I totally believe you can do this part, no." "Well then why are you asking to..." "No, no, it's because, remember you were excited before about Christian Bale, and you know that was exciting, right? And he was going to be, and wasn't he really the guy who's going to be the, are you really going to get fat and do all that stuff? Isn't he the guy?" "You're saying that you don't believe I..." "I do believe you can do it; I do believe you can do it." "Then I don't want to hear another word about it." "Okay."

So now I'm not supposed to do it. Every couple of days Christian calls up, he goes, "How's it going? Are we going to get me back in there?" I go, "Erm, working on it, working on it." I go through this harrowing, any director in this room or producer will know what I'm talking about. I go through these many grey hair-raising weeks with my family deliberating over should I do this or not? Should I go to the mat for Christian Bale or not? And risk offending a dear friend and collaborator, Bradley Cooper. And what happens to Jeremy Renner too? So what happens? So, so, I, finally I come to the decision I'm going to do it. My publicist, my producers, my lawyers all say don't do it. They say it's going to be a disaster and you're going to blow up the movie. But I'm staying true to some

instinct I have that it's for the best, for the best movie. What a crazy business we've picked, you know, I wish I had been a doctor like my mom said.

So Bradley Cooper rides a motorcycle, and he comes over to the cutting room of *Silver Linings* and I decide I'm going to tell him. So my heart's pounding like Pacino's in that scene in *The Godfather*, when he's going to go you know into that restaurant and shoot those guys, and he knows it but they don't know it. So Cooper comes in and it's like a ten-minute ritual we have to take off the Velcro suit, the bike suit that's you know. He's taking off the suit, he takes off the helmet, my heart's going bump bump bump bump bump. Takes off the helmet, sits down, "So buddy, how are we," he goes. He's happy, he's loose. I go, "So, Christian Bale really wants to come back, and he immediately stands up, he goes, "That's it," collects all of his gear, he says, "That's it, I told you if you brought this up again I'm off the movie. Goodbye." And he's walking down the hallway, it's a very long hallway, if you've ever been to... No, Lantana has a hallway that's like 100 yards long, in Santa Monica, it's worthy of Kubrick. And he's walking, *[moves from the lectern]* feels nice to be out of that lectern, and he's walking down the hallway and I'm shouting after him, he's 50 yards ahead of me. I'm shouting ahead of him, "I do not accept your answer, I do not accept your answer," to his back as he walks away. Now because he's a great guy and my friend he comes back, and we're sitting on a mixing stage days later, and he says to me, "What about Jeremy Renner, what's going to happen to him?" He said, "If you can figure out what happens to Jeremy Renner, I'll consider staying and doing the FBI guy and going back to that role." I go, "Okay."

So now the ball game, every producer and director in this room knows what I'm talking about, now the ball game. Now I spend a month being Henry Kissinger going to, from Christian Bale's house to Bradley Cooper's house to Jeremy Renner's house to Christian Bale's house. Every night after I'm editing *Silver Linings* and mixing it I go to Jeremy Renner's house. Jeremy Renner lives in Preston

Sturges' house, which is a very beautiful house, that he's restored beautifully. And the first thing he says to me is, "Fuck this, let Christian Bale play the other guy. I'm going to be the guy that I was supposed to be." And I said, I went to his house, and this is how the muses come to us, I say, "See here's who you're going to be. You're going to be a very important role, it's a very important role you have. It's as important as any role in the movie." And he's sitting there like this, "Uh huh, what is it?" I go, "It's the mayor, it's the mayor you know. And he's based on a real guy, and without him the movie really has no heartbeat, he's the heart and soul of the movie this guy. Without him there's no regular person tied to the salt of the Earth people of the community, with a big family that he truly loves, the FBI even loved him, the town loved him, he truly was trying to do good for his community and he got caught up with some bad shit that sent him to jail. And he's a good guy who loves life, and he loves music and he loves food and he loves his town." And by the time I walk out of his house I go, "That is a fucking good role. That's a good role."

And it turns out, and it turns out also, furthermore, see if you give your... You know, Goethe said, "The moment you make a commitment," see I had made a commitment. When you make a commitment, if you hold back from commitment that's when your head's up your ass. You're kind of like, "Ah well, you know, let me think about it." No, no, that's no good, you've got to go with your gut. So I made a commitment, I committed to this, my head could have been chopped off at any moment, could have lost the whole picture. The commitment, Goethe said, "Things will appear to you that you never imagined. The universe will avail things to you that you never thought were possible." And I suddenly realise, "My God, this is what the movie needed. The movie needed this guy. Without this guy there's no beloved salt of the Earth character, and when I'm shooting on the movie this is the guy whose house I want to live in. I want to live in his house with his five kids, and the music he's playing, and the food he's eating. So you know, that's a story of kismet, and Bradley Cooper goes, "Okay." And then what's great for

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me is that my actors make me reach harder and higher, I now have to make it worthy of each of my actors, and that made me make each role more baroque and graphic than it could ever have been.

And then comes Jennifer Lawrence as a last-minute walk-on, who was supposed to be on vacation and had no time to do the movie, which was another act of kismet when I was scouting the location and I'm standing in the bedroom and I call her up and I say, "Listen, I know you're not available technically, but I just would feel remiss as your friend if I didn't at least give you a shot at this." And she says, "Well describe it to me." And the producers around the set are going, "What are you doing? What are you doing? We have another actress we're talking to." And I get off the phone, I say, "I think she's going to do it." And this goes all the way the precipice, because as you famously know there was dividing up the money that she spoke about, how's she going to get paid? Everybody had to give up some pay to pay her, and her lawyer and her agent are saying, "Don't get on the airplane to come to shoot until we get what we need." And I call her, I say, "Get on the plane please," and because she's my friend she gets on the plane and she comes to shoot. This is the adventure we've chosen of this life.

People ask me why I collaborate with her so much, or Robert De Niro or Bradley Cooper. My first answer would be this: Bette Davis collaborated with William Wyler on five films. Katharine Hepburn and George Cukor collaborated on seven films. Katharine Hepburn collaborated with George Stevens on three films. Scorsese with Robert De Niro, eight films. I think DiCaprio is up about six. If you're friends with somebody and you happen to like and respect each other, you can inspire each other. And if it's organic you just do it. And the story came to us about a mop, and I said, well to me, Jennifer, they offered it to both of us. And I said, we said, "We'll only do it if we can do it together and if we can have the real lady's blessing, the real Joy's blessing, to do it how we would do it." And Jennifer said, "How are we going to do it?" I told her, "We're going to do it

where we see your whole lifetime and it's about the soul of a girl, the soul of a woman, that starts in her father's scrap metal garage, that is made up of the soap operas her mother watches, and she finds herself a prisoner in a way of the soap opera of her own house. And she has dreams and magic as a child, dreams and magic that have somehow gotten smothered." And that can happen to anybody, you wake up one day and you can barely hear the distant music of magic that you once knew. And adult concerns, there are so many compromises and disappointments in adult life: jobs, bills, relationships. Where's the distant magic?

So she said, "Those are all good questions." And I said, "I want you to be haunted by nightmares, nightmares of your childhood that will urge you to wake up and take control of your life." And I've never seen a movie that is about a woman, who's at the centre of it, who becomes the godmother of a family business. And by the godmother I mean like Michael Corleone, I mean she has to be the one who's least likely to succeed in her family, the one who is the most invisible in the first half of the movie. The one who in the second half is going to change the whole rhythm of the movie by almost becoming a gangster in a western. I mixed two genres there. And she's going to go and face the men who are going to take it away from her, she goes and faces the men who are going to go take it away from her. And by the end of it we're going to flash forward in the wonderful narration of her grandmother, who's the woman who believes in her who's now dead, and I love narrators from beyond the grave, who's going to say that she didn't know on the day she'd broken through what her future would be. And we get to see Jennifer at 45 blessing, passing on that blessing to another young woman who wants to take a chance, and forbearing and forgiving those in her family who have betrayed her. All of this is true, and all of that is the true definition of strength to me, is that it's large enough to be forgiving, it's large enough to not be threatened by small people, and that is who the real Joy turned out to be when we met her. She's a fierce person who is loving and has forgiven the people in her

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family who now work for her, who at one time betrayed her and sued her and did all kinds of things to her, and that to me is a truly powerful person.

So I'm going to end, I'm going to go out the door that we came in, another David Lean door, by speaking about a movie that I think is an overlooked gem that mirrors much of what happens in *Joy*. And that gem is again about a woman who's invisible to her family, whose father underestimates her, who has sisters who underestimate her and who are envious of her, who could very easily end up as Miss Havisham. And the name of the movie is *Hobson's Choice*, and the woman works in a boot shop in Manchester run by her father, Charles Laughton, and he's declared her a spinster at 30, too old to be married. And she promptly at that point takes it as a call to arms, and promptly takes control of her life, her own business, and starts her own business with a man who is man enough to love her and to work for her, and that's what we have in *Joy*; a man who is man enough to love her and work for her, not be threatened as a man, to work for a woman. And for me, my joy is in facing the fears I face every day as a human and as a filmmaker, and my characters face this every day, every second, finding their way through fear. As George Patton said, "Courage is fear holding on one minute longer," that's what courage is. So that's what these stories are, my characters are finding a way to hold on for one minute longer, and they're not going to stop, that goes one minute at a time.

So having said that, I think I've said all the beautiful things I want to say, and I'm going to end with a David Lean quote. And I'm going to mash it up like a DJ would with a Yo-Yo Ma quote. David Lean said, "My distinguished talent is the ability to put people under the microscope, perhaps to go one or two layers farther down than some other directors." And that's my aspiration with every picture. And it never gets easy, and it keeps me humble, and it keeps me inspired. And I like that I can open up a movie that felt like it was a sideways catastrophe like *American Hustle*, and me and my editor can turn to each other and say, "Can you believe we

made that movie," which is the best kind of pride of craftsmanship you can feel. Someone once said, "What you call genius is my ninth choice," that's the humility of craftsmanship. I believe craftsmanship is a tireless pursuit that never ends.

And there's been a misnomer for our cinema that's been called 'controlled chaos' and I want to personally get this beef out in the open. You can't make the movies we make as lovely as they are and as propulsive as they are in 33 days or 42 days as we do, unless you have a very defined script and you've choreographed everything very carefully. That doesn't mean you still might shoot it in one and do coverage in one, which means you're going to say to the actor over here while we're doing the scene, "Okay Bob, I'm going to come over to you, are you ready?" I'm looking at Jennifer right now, "Bob, are you ready?" That means nobody can stop and think and be in their dressing room or their trailer. Nobody goes to their trailer; I don't have a trailer on my sets. I'd rather be on my feet having to be alive in the moment. And we set every frame in this picture to look like Edward Hopper, for I believe the journey of anybody who faces life, family or work is a solitary journey ultimately, you have to do it alone. And that's why we framed Jennifer many times in a beautiful frame by herself, as much as she's surrounded by other people. And you know I could talk about music, but I think we can do that in the conversation now, right? Yeah. I think that's what we can do. Yeah, let's do that. Thank you.

[Applause]

FS: I think you'd like to take a seat at Miss Havisham's table.

DOR: I would, very much.

FS: With this unfortunately it does force me into a kind of position then of being Miss Havisham, more or less.

DOR: Would you like me to play Miss Havisham?

FS: We could take turns. Thank you very much for that, which was entertaining

and challenging in various measures. I want to pick up first of all on that idea of the salt of the Earth film, and the reinvention and the transformation. And what makes your films so extraordinary and so satisfying is always that sense that the transformation, the reinvention is, it's something slightly off-kilter, something not quite conventional, something kind of real, as opposed to a movie resolution.

DOR: Yeah, I would say I love exuberation. I love exuberance and I love inspiration, but you've got to come by it honestly, okay, which is not easy to pull off. You know it's hard to make it look effortless and that's what we try to do. So you know in *Silver Linings Playbook* that means when they win they win with a five out of ten, so no one at the dance competition understands why they're celebrating, and they're celebrating because they fit into a bet that the father made that they could get at least a five, so that to me is an honest victory. And we had a producer who has produced musicals, who when he saw the daily said, "You know they're not very good dancers." I said, "Hold on a minute, I think they're perfect dancers, because first of all they're not supposed to be professional dancers, they're regular people dancers. And as regular people dancers I find them wonderful, and that's how they're going to stand out at that competition."

In *Joy*, to me what's wonderful about it is that she's a Cinderella without a prince, that was something I'd never seen before. She has the best divorce in America, which means her ex-husband loves her and they're friends, and they become better friends than they ever were a married couple. That to me is a beautiful thing that I'd not seen in a picture, in a movie. And in the end she doesn't have a romance that saves her. Bradley Cooper is her partner and adversary in commerce, but he's not going to become the love of her life. Her love is her children who will come to run her company, her father and her ex-husband who love her, and her best friend who love her, that's the love she's surrounded by. That love is every bit as worth it to me as what we think is a conventional love, so to me that is a win.

And Jennifer and I saw *Joy* as a meditation on what success really is. Because I've watched her go from being an unknown girl of 20 years old to have the world engulf her with attention. And I kept saying to her, "Please hold onto your soul and protect it, because as we've seen with many brilliant talents, they'll pull you into pieces if you don't get a good hold of yourself and put protection around it." And that's what the movie's about. I mean right after *Silver Linings Playbook* Jennifer chopped her hair off, which she said because her hair was damaged, I say it was because she was making a declaration of self-ownership and protection, and that's what happens in the third act of *Joy*. She chops her hair off which is a declaration of war, that she's not going to take no for an answer. That's what every director has to do also, they'll go down clinging to the base of the editing machine, you know that's where they'll find me. They'll rip it out of my hands, you know.

FS: And the propulsive nature of the films, the propulsion that you just referred to, where does that come? That doesn't come in the edit, that comes in the writing, or that comes, and how is, how do you get that? I mean you get that by constantly reading it to yourself? Do you get that if you're in rehearsals? Do you get that on set? Where does it come from?

DOR: I think of the movie in waves. I do it as a storyteller like I told you. I'll go tell the story to each person, and to the studio, because the beautiful thing about the people who believe in me, my financiers and my producers, Megan Ellison, Matt Budman, Jim Gianopulous, Elizabeth Gabler, Harvey Weinstein, is that they're taking me on faith. Because I write the script right up till the moment we're shooting, and even the actors, so it's an act of faith and trust. And what, I think that's not as bad as if I told them, "Well we don't have anything." We never have a Cassavetes thing, we never step on set not knowing what we're doing. But that means I keep going to their house telling them what the scene is and what the character is and what they're going to get to do, and I keep telling the studio that. So that

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makes me have to tell it like it's a story I'm telling you, that would want to captivate you, I'd have to captivate you.

And I think of a movie in waves. This wave must captivate you then break, then begin a new wave, then captivate you then break. And music is very much a part of that, and I have treasure troves of music that I sit on, I'm old enough now to say for 20 to 30 years, that in the age of the internet you must protect very carefully because you want to use it as no one's used it, and you want to surprise people with it. And that can be a Duke Ellington piece that I've had for 20, 30 years that becomes the song of the couple in *American Hustle*. In this film it's a Nat King Cole song called A House With Love In It, that sort of narrates her beautiful mature moment. It's Jennifer's most mature, quiet performance, because after being crazy in two films we said, "Why don't you, let's have you, what's it like for you to be the unanxious presence in the room, the quiet presence, and be powerful in that way." That's a new challenge.

And after she'd broken through and had to bare-knuckle it with an adversary who tried to take it away from her, she looks through a toy store window, and we shot it beat for beat to the song because Nat King Cole says, "Snow is now falling," and at that moment snow falls, and she looks up and it's pretend snow outside a toy store that's falling from a machine. And that to me was a very beautiful moment of adulthood and reflection, just as when I watch Jennifer move into her own house. This little girl from Kentucky who when I first knew her lived in her parents' condo, the house in Kentucky or a condo in Santa Monica, bought her own house two years ago, and I was there when she, just her and me unpacking the boxes. And I saw her unpack a box that had things in it she'd not seen since she was six or seven. That became a very powerful moment for me to have the privilege of witnessing, and that's why I put it in the movie.

I think that's a powerful moment to look back at time, that's what's magical about cinema to me, to look back at time, and to play with time. To, let's thrust

you into the middle of this predicament at the beginning of *American Hustle*, and then let's tell you okay who is this guy, and who's this lady and how did they did they fall in love? Let's go back, let's go back and tell you each of their stories. Now let's zap back into the predicament. Now we're hurtling along into the predicament. Now here's this mayor character, who's he? Now Louis CK and Bradley Cooper are going to do a short movie about that guy, about the Jeremy Renner character. That was beautiful to shoot in 16mm, then you come back into the present. That's exciting cinema to me, and it's the magic of time. It's the magic of Diane Ladd telling us Joy's future when she doesn't know it herself, and then coming back to Joy in the present.

FS: And when, I mean somewhere in that journey between the seven year-old who went to see *Great Expectations* and where we are now, what was it that made you feel that you wanted to make films? Was it the visual thing, or was it to do with language and dialogue, or situation?

DOR: I love the rhythm of language, and there's a music to language, and I do love the rhythm of it. And I love writing it, and I love listening to it. Other filmmakers as well as the dialogue that comes out of the actors I'm privileged to work with's mouths, you know, that has a magic and a music to it that I aspire to write. I also, I never thought I would be a filmmaker, I loved movies and I lived in them in my mind. I think Paul Greengrass rightly observed when I saw his David Lean Lecture, that I think most people in this business come from homes that were rather fractured and dramatic, like a movie, and we spend the rest of our lives kind of expressing that. And it's a gift from our families in a strange way, and that's what my mother is saying to me. It is not merely terrible, I believe that these things, that's the whole point of these movies and the point of life, if you've ever... You know, Gandhi said, "Nothing wastes the human body like worry," and anyone who has any faith should be ashamed to worry about anything whatsoever." And he laid that down, that's just something that I never stop thinking about. So faith means you see

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the terrible things that happen and you say to yourself, "Maybe this is not terrible," which flies in the face of all reason, but it's happened to me again and again.

Look at the whole Jeremy Renner story. I mean look at the story of my son's diagnosis. I never would have met Jennifer Lawrence, I never would have made *Silver Linings*, I never would have come over here to the BAFTAs and you know watch, and made the face on Google and gone like that. You know if my son had not had those issues. And there was a beautiful symmetry to that because when I made my first film it won the Independent Spirit Awards at Sundance, and it won the Sundance Film Festival which allowed me to leave my day job. I was a bartender, I had worked in an office, I was a waiter. I had so many jobs and I was entering my early, I was a late bloomer, you know I, Quentin and I are friends, and I always joke with him, I say you know, "You came out of the womb whole: A 30 year-old man with a gun in one hand and a cigarette in the other, then you said, 'Let's make *Reservoir Dogs*.'" and you know I was kind of working into my early, mid thirties saying, "I'm about to become the obscure relative who once wanted to be a filmmaker." And that was a terrifying thing as all my friends has jobs and cars, and I had an apartment as big as half this stage that looked at nothing.

So I wrote that film on jury duty out of anger, that first film, and it was just for me. It was a filthy, angry story just for me. It was too filthy to dare show anyone. And then Gus van Sant who I became friends with kind of introduced me to his first film which was called *Mala Noche*, which, we all teach each other, we all learn from each other. And in that film, I said, "Wow, you made a movie about a middle-aged white guy like you, who falls in love with a Latino busboy." I was like, wow, that takes balls, you know. So that's human and that's beautiful. So that kind of gave me the permission to start showing somebody, it gave me enormous pleasure to write that script because it all came from instinct. And the other scripts I'd been writing I'd been labouring over and suffering over, and they were just going on and on and on.

I'd get up at five in the morning every day and write for two or three hours before work, I had no life. Everybody says, "Your 20s are the gayest time of your life, you're so happy." I did not have any of that, I mean the running around New York and the partying, I didn't do any of that. You know so I was just working, and that wasn't getting anywhere The one from instinct is the one that got me to leave my day job, that got me that guy to champion me, the guy who later ran the studio who said, "Over my dead body will David Russell make *The Fighter*," he championed me for over ten or fifteen years, and it got me my first job which was writing a script for Dolly Parton. And while I was rapidly doing that I was writing my second film quickly before the baby's born, see how you can put food on the table, *Flirting With Disaster*, and you know you're kind of one step ahead of the bill collector.

FS: And the fact that, I mean writing these salt of the Earth stories, writing about people and their working lives and their ordinary lives, I mean that's been quite, as far as people financing films, that's not been a particularly attractive area for a long time, unless it's been stories of misery, or stories of escapism, I mean actually addressing the way life is. But you've obviously found regular people who will finance stuff like that, but was it difficult?

DOR: Well let me say this, we have been very fortunate to reach a wide audience with films that have, they have to be wonderful characters, the films have to have enormous heart, they have to be wildly alive. And the music and the performances, everything about it has to be beautiful. The landing strip is about this big, to land that film for a broad audience and to reach that broad audience. And things like the BAFTAs or the ritual of the awards in America, whether you win them or not, whether you get nominated or not, what matters is they bring excitement to cinema. And in a world proliferated with way too much media, I liked when there was only four channels, I don't know how to work my television today. You know my wife has to work my television, I don't know how to find Netflix or a show or a game

or anything, there's five remotes. So there's too much media, and too much media, how do you make anything special? I grew up in the 70s where it was all terribly important, and you had to go see *Chinatown*, you had to go see *The Godfather*, you had to go see *Shampoo*, you had to go see *Dog Day Afternoon*, and you'd go back again and again and again, and I taught myself cinema by memorising chunks of those movies that I could recite right now, I ingested them. So I think the cinema of ordinary has to be extraordinary to earn it, so you've got to do it like there's a gun to your head every time, because if you're a little bit off you'll miss the landing strip. And you've got to inspire people and do something that's never been done before in that way. And there's not a lot of films reaching a wide audience with that world.

FS: Okay, I'm going to throw it open now and we can always come back and do some more here. If anybody's got a question they'd like, there are a couple of microphones. Yep, hands going up all over the place. There's one here if you can get the microphone there, and also here.

Q: Hey, thanks very much for that, it was really great, I loved it. My question is about, I'm also a director but a more commercial director wanting to do exactly what you do. When you've got such talent in front of the screen as you've mentioned, and you know they're obviously brilliant at what they do, how do you go about going, "I want you to change, I want you to do something different." How do you go about giving direction to someone who's just so great and that maybe that doesn't need directing?

DOR: It's a balance. You often have to save them from themselves, and so I have to give them choices. You have to have a vision, you have to have the courage to fight for your vision and to give yourself a choice in the editing room. And when an actor says to me, no matter how great that talent, great talents don't just show up and happen. I mean, you know, you have to direct them, you have to give yourself the choices, and you have to make the film

cinematically magnificent with the camera movement; the holy trifacta of emotion, camera movement and music. It has to be a wonderful thing that's almost seamless, and makes people want to go back and watch it again. That's not just raw talent showing up. You have to have the courage of your convictions, and you have to respectfully say to them, "Okay, you want to do it that way. In the time it would take us to discuss it I'd like to shoot it both ways." And if they say, "Well why? I know my way is right," I'll say, "Well if you'd please indulge me it's because I'm stupid, and I don't know what the best way is. You know I'm kind of dumb, so sometimes I need to go to the editor and figure out what's the best way. And sometimes I'm surprised that my way was not the best way. Sometimes I'm surprised that your way is the best way, but it might turn out to be the reverse." There are many scenes where the last take that I ask them to do, completely the opposite of what they were doing, became the take. You must give yourself that range of choices.

So Christian Bale and Bradley Cooper, two wonderful, beautiful actors whom I adore, with Amy Adams, are sparking at each other like dogs in the opening scene of *American Hustle*, when Jeremy Renner has left the room and refuses to participate and pick up the briefcase full of cash. And Christian Bale is yelling, and Bradley Cooper is saying, "You've got to go get him to pick up the cash. Go get him." And Christian Bale's saying, "No, you go get him. It's your operation, you fucked it up, I'm not going to go get him." They did that like barking dogs for like five takes. The last take, I say, "How about we do one where we, let's do one where we whisper." And they say, "Why?" I say, "Just because. Please." "But why would they whisper?" "Well okay, you want to play that game? I'll play that game." I've said that to Melissa Leo, who, you know I'm very proud of my actors who have won statues and those who I feel deserve, I always feel my babies deserve to win. But they don't always win, but that's okay. Robert De Niro taught me ten years ago justice is rarely done, but that's okay. That ain't why we doing it, we're not doing it for that. We're doing it to make it great. The

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world recognises that or doesn't recognise that. So I will play that game. I'll go, "Okay, there's no reason why your character would do that? Okay, I'm going to make up a really deep reason why your character would do that," because you can always come up with a deep reason why your character would do that. "See the reason your character's whispering is because they're really afraid that this guy in the FBI is such an idiot that the whole thing's going to come crashing down around them, and he's containing his rage, because he's afraid he's going to lose..." So you see, I've got a whole thing now that I didn't even think of until that minute.

I'll go, "Let's play that game, you want to play that game. Let's go, you know you've only got one way that it can be done? I'm so glad that you're a greater genius than me that you know the one way it can be done. I'm just saying give me a choice, and I'm going to protect you, you know" And I'm not precious in my editing room, I'm not precious, I invite anybody into my editing room. The producer, the head of the studio, the actor, give me what you got, hit me with your best shot. I'm a professional baseball player, I've played 162 games a season, you've got to play all nine innings, you've got to know what it's like to take a punch and spit out a tooth and get up, so there's no punch you can give me that I haven't experienced, okay. So what have you got? What, you think this is a piece of shit? Go ahead, tell me. Okay, it's a piece of shit, okay we've established that, now I'd like to know what is your solution to the piece of shit? Let's hear what your solution is. Let's try your solution, let's try it. Hallelujah, you were right, it's better. Or, I don't think so, I don't think it came out better, I think maybe the original way was better, or maybe we still haven't figured out the solution. Maybe we've got to find a third way that's the solution," you know what I'm saying? It's relentless, you must never stop trying to figure out what the best movie is. You always have to think at any second, until they rip it out of your hands, that's how I do it.

[Applause]

Q: Hello. I was struck by, you used quite a lot of nautical metaphors when you were talking about filmmaking, about scenes you know breaking like waves, and clinging to the edit suite and all that sort of thing. And I was, I remembered that line which I'm going to misquote in *Joy* where Isabella Rossellini's character quotes her late husband who said that sailing in winter is like the world of commerce. And I wondered, could you relate that to the world of cinema?

DOR: Absolutely. I mean that film, Hugh Hudson, is he here tonight? Yeah, he said he was going to come, I'm not surprised he didn't come, but that's okay. Listen, I mean you can't drag me out of my house to come to these things. But he was kind enough to have dinner with me last night, and he's an early hero, there's so many heroes of filmmaking that there's too many to name, and too many in this room and too many in this country to name, and I'm humbled by all of them. And Hugh Hudson said to me, "Your movie about this lady starting this company is really about a filmmaker," and I said, "It is. It is about a filmmaker." It's always going to be; you know it's always going to get fucked up ten ways till Sunday in ways that you could never imagine. There's going to be ten people who try to take it away from you, ten people who try to take credit from it, ten people who try to sue you for it, someone in some other city you have to go confront or deal with you know. It's just like filmmaking, and you have to bleed for it, that is very much.

Filmmaking is like that, any endeavour, Jennifer many times on this movie would literally collapse in exhaustion at my feet and say, "David, this is my Everest, this movie's my Everest." Because she'd never carried a movie without a bow and arrow. She'd never done it with her heart and played all these different ages, and the movie was centred around her. She'd come in and be the wild one who stole the scene, and now she had to do something more mature and deeper in a different way, which she's utterly capable of doing, it's why we took the risk. And I would say to her, what I must say to myself every day, in life and in commerce and in cinema,

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"Any worthy endeavour will make you think you're not going to make it." 'It's just not going to work out. It's not going to work out man.' And you've got to face that feeling, and you've got to sit there and you're going to be alone with you and whatever you call it, God. 'You're not going to make it.' And you have to go, 'you can't tell, don't tell anybody else that.' So the actors come in and they go, "Well you know I'm really scared we're not going to make it," like Jennifer. You go, "Well, here's why we're going to make it," you know, and you have to be the one who finds the faith, and that's the beautiful mystery of life and the mystery of faith, of reaching. You reach for something unattainable, you're always reaching for something unattainable. And in reaching for something unattainable you're asking everyone to do something that almost never feels like it gets there. By doing that, if you're fortunate you get some magic.

I thought it was you? It's not you?

FS: It is.

DOR: It is her.

Q: Hi, that was fun.

DOR: Is it still fun? It's not fun anymore?

Q: Yeah, no, sorry, it's still fun. In the moment, yeah.

DOR: Hey, Alexa. Yay, it's good to see you, what a good seat you're in.

Q: So I was thinking about, so you're sometimes still rewriting scenes when you're shooting the scenes?

DOR: Well let me put it to you this way, you write a script, I spend so much of my time writing, you know it's as if I spend all my time writing, okay. You write and write and write. I write more than you can use. And Quentin said the same thing, Quentin told me a very inspiring story the other day, because he said to me, "David I'm very inspired by your story." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "How you kind of are very humble and honest about how you lost your way, and then how you began this new

chapter of your filmmaking career." And he said to me, "I feel our careers started together in the 90s, we both were at the Independent Spirit Awards together and we kind of came up together at Harvey's company and you know, you kind of started this whole new chapter," that I just you know, he's been very gracious and kind about to my great honour and shock. So I said, "But that happened to you too." And he said, "What do you mean?" I said, "You made a movie called *Grindhouse*." And I knew just as an observer, okay, that he went like *Pulp Fiction*, *Jackie Brown*, *Kill Bill 1 & 2*, *Grindhouse*. Now *Grindhouse* is like his art experiment about, an ode to the cinema that he dug okay, that kind of landed sideways, not like they wanted it to land.

And I could tell after coming out of that, he took a good look at himself and his work and he said, "You're damn right." I said, "And you needed to protect and continue your legacy, didn't you?" He said, "Yes I did." And I said, "You went, you said you're going to go deep, you're going to go into history, you're going to go to the Nazis and the Jews." And he said, "Yes." I said, "But what happened?" He said, "I'd had a script for many years," that script, but he couldn't figure out how to do it, because it was too long, he wrote it like a novel. It had a whole hour in it that he couldn't figure out how to do. I said, "What was the hour?" It's a whole other hour about an African-American brigade, that I suppose part of it landed in, in the next movie he went after history again with *Django*. You know so, and a movie star, he didn't go out either time without a movie star, he said I'm going out with a movie star both times. That's where you start to say no more fooling around. So you write that way, I'm constantly writing.

So in answer to your question, even though you constantly write, like look at him, he's a great writer, he's won two Oscars for writing, he still couldn't figure out how to get it quite right. That doesn't, you might change it on the day. So here's an example: we go into *American Hustle*, and Jennifer's character, one of the selling points that we were all excited about, which was

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based on some truth, is that she was supposed to kill herself. Okay, she was supposed to hang herself, okay. And as we went into principal photography, every day I was a little less easy with that. And the stunt guys were saying, "Is this where you want us to hang the thing with the rope from the thing?" And I'd go, "Er, yeah. Oh, near the dining room table? Okay." And so they were rigging the whole thing. And then I amend it to a scene where she's going to try to hang herself but Amy Adams and Christian Bale are going to get there in time to save her and yell at her for trying to kill herself. And I thought, "That's a good scene, they're going to yell at her."

Because then you, I've experienced that, my, I've had people try to do that, and you're pissed off at them. You know you're like, "Don't you fucking do that." You know I'm not going to pity them, I'm going to say, "Don't you fucking do that." And I have to say that to myself when I felt that way. "No no no no no no, we're not going to go down that road. There's people much worse off than you, you get a hold of yourself. And you go have a nice meal and listen to a nice record and take it easy, nothing's that bad, it can't be that bad. You're taking yourself entirely too seriously." So there's lots of reasons to live for. That's why, like in *American Hustle* I had to find what were they living for, their romance. If they were just con artists, I don't give a shit about them. The first ad campaign was, "They're con artists." I said, "I don't care, I just don't care that they're con artists. I care that they're in love, I care that they're magical, I care that they've invented themselves with these beautiful clothes and they've invented this life that they're trying to prop up."

So, here comes the day we're supposed to do the hanging scene. She's still supposed to hang, right, but they're supposed to catch her and pick her up, a whole scripted scene. The actors, you know my actors have to be patient. They had that scene, they learned it, the first one when she dies. Now comes the second one where she didn't die and they argued with her. On the day driving into work I go, "I don't know. No" You have to pay attention to this stuff. You know it's like you kind of just want to do

your homework and be done with it don't you? But unfortunately it just doesn't work like that, your homework's never done, so you can never stop asking the question if you want to get it right. So we arrived at work and I said to Christian and Jennifer, who fortunately are wonderful brave people, I said, "New idea. There's going to be no hanging." First question from the back, Amy Adams says, "Wait a minute, does that mean I'm not coming in to find her and yell at her?" I go, "I'm sorry, yeah, you're not going to come in and yell at her after she tried to hang herself." So Amy Adams is thinking, "Oh dang it, I've lost a scene." And Christian says, "Now what's going to happen to me?"

So we hole up in the kid's room, that little red room that was the kid's room, and the whole crew's waiting, and Jennifer, Christian and I map out the scene. And it becomes a wonderful scene you know, a better scene. I said, "Here's what's going to happen. She's going to have sung Live and Let Die, she's going to have sent a gangster to scare you and maybe kill you, and you're going to burst in the room to scream at her in front of your child. How dare she send someone to try to kill you? And she's going to say she's finally fallen in love with someone, and you wanted her to fall in love with somebody else. And you're going to say, 'But why did you pick a gangster who's a terrible person?' And she's going to say, 'Everybody I meet is through you. I met him through you.'" And that becomes a wonderful scene, you know. "And why can't you just be happy for me," she says. So I mean, and that's how that happened okay, so you know that's how that happens.

Q: Hi, thank you very much David. Can you, can we talk about music and how important that is for you, and how you collaborate with your composers?

DOR: Composers, or the source music?

Q: Both.

DOR: Okay, source music, it begins in my life 34 years ago when I hang onto films that feel cinematic and I wait for the opportunity to use them and to write a scene to them. In Joy that included Nat

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King Cole, it also included a Neil Young song that he wrote with his first band, Buffalo Springfield, called Expecting To Fly, which has a cinematic orchestrated opening that becomes the realisation that someone has died in our movie, and it becomes a very beautiful song, and I was so happy when it found a place in our movie. So you do that, and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't work, and sometimes it works to the next movie. Composers, oh by the way also Sue Jacobs is a beautiful music supervisor who has trained me from the beginning, like Joy, to never take no for an answer.

So Sue Jacobs and I become partners in crime trying to get the rights to this music. So when I want to use Led Zeppelin I turn around and say to this \$18million budget called *The Fighter*, I suddenly have the realisation in the cutting room that Christian Bale's crime spree, when he decides to support his brother, he says, "I can figure out how to support you," it becomes a big crime spree that played in sync, like written dialogue, like a bunch of scenes. Cinematic revelation, this is the wonderment of creation isn't it. You realise in the editing room, "No, let's do this as a, let's make this as a big tour de force scene that plays to one song, with little bits of dialogue." And it just, it's a magnificent piece of music and it will carry you through this whole experience of the family eating and celebrating, thinking they're going to have a nice future, and him sort of ruining their future by committing the crime, and they don't know it, cross-cutting. So we cut this in the cutting room and the studio says to me, "What are you going to use in there," and I said, "Led Zeppelin."

And this is a studio that is out of business, God bless them. They took a chance on us, it was called Relativity, and they said, "Led Zeppelin?" They kind of laughed, they said, "Led Zeppelin," and their music supervisor said, "You will never license Led Zeppelin. First of all, if you even get permission, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant half the time don't speak to each other, and when they do they can't agree. And the other half the time if they do agree, they'll charge you a million dollars, and our whole music budget is \$300,000." And they said, "We

went to them and they said it would be a million dollars." And I said, "Okay, do I have your permission to try and go get it myself?" And they said, "Yeah." I said, "I'm sorry you fucked it up already, I wish you didn't fuck it up already."

You know because the way they did it was, you can never do it like this, you know you must learn that you have no end of patience, just like with the actor situation with *American Hustle*, there can be no end to your patience and no end to your humility, then you can do a lot of things. But if you come out and you go, "Well here, how much do you want," it's over, it's over you know. So now I start, where do I begin? Sue teaches me, Sue Jacobs trains me. She says, "Here's how you've got to do it, you've got to go artist to artist from your heart. Reach out to their manager in the United States, that's the first step, good luck." So I go to their United States business manager and I say, "Hi, we're making this film, and this song," it's the first song from their first album by the way that's never been licensed, Good Times Bad Times, has never been licensed. The first song from their first album, their enunciation into the world is Good Times Bad Times, that's a very important song to them.

So I spent four months just trying to make this guy my friend, which means I have no limit to the amount of time I'm willing to talk to him, and if he wants to get off the phone it's going to be really hard, because I'm just going to be so slow and so enjoy talking to him. And every time he tells me no I go, "I understand, I understand. But do you just think you might, you might consider, do you think you might, is it possible you would come see the film? Is that possible? Oh my God, you would think about that? Oh thank you so much, thank you, thank you. Oh yes, we're having a preview in El Segundo, that would mean the world to me. Oh thank you." Now this man feels respected, okay, as he should be respected. He holds, you know if I really want the song I got to respect him. He comes to the film, I never bring up the money, never bring up money the whole time. Eventually I say, "You know, the movie's a passion movie. We all made it from passion. Meaning, we've got no money, we made it for \$18million, you

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understand what I'm saying?" He goes, "I understand." I go, "So, you know we're going to make it epic and wonderful, but you know I'm willing to beg them if you give me the chance to beg them." Now he comes to England, to the English manager, but now he's on my side, see so he's on my side.

Now we go through the whole thing, and so the next time, I'm sorry, the next time Led Zeppelin, we go back to them with *Silver Linings Playbook* because they have a wonderful song called What Is And What Shall Never Be. And it's a very bipolar song, it starts off very quietly, it's when Bradley Cooper meets Jennifer Lawrence, and she says to him, "Look, I can tell by the way you were looking at me at dinner that you like me and I like you, and why don't you come back right now and we'll just do it right now." And he's like, "Who are you? Who says that? I just met you." And he says, "I'm married." And she says, "Well that makes no sense because your wife has a restraining order on you." And she says, "Well I'm married too." And he goes, "Well that makes no sense, your husband is dead." You know this is who these two people are. And she suddenly starts crying, and he holds her, not knowing what's happening. And then she pushes out of the hug, as any decent woman would be to have her advances rejected, even if it's an inappropriate advance, and slaps him, okay, because he didn't accept her advance. And the moment she slaps him, "And if I say to you tomorrow," that song begins. And by the time he gets home it plays through this whole, then it gets very loud, and he starts to have this breakdown thinking about his, she's the thread that pulls him apart. She touched a nerve in him, she got inside his delusion, his delusion is he's going to get his wife back.

This whole song plays out, Led Zeppelin says, "Not so fast. You got us too cheap last time, so not so fast." So we go, "Okay, let's make a step deal," Sue Jacobs, the genius, says. I go, "What's a step deal?" She goes, "That's where you know, if the movie makes more money, they make more money." So as a result of Harvey and *Silver Linings* and the BAFTAs, it's true, the movie makes a lot of money for the budget. It was a \$23million

budget you know and it made a lot of money worldwide. And so Led Zeppelin made perhaps more money than they had on any other song on that movie, so then on *American Hustle* they come back and they say, "Aren't you going to use a Led Zeppelin song?" And so, I think they did, and they did use Good Times Bad Times in the trailer.

So, and then composers are a different story altogether, and I've had the pleasure of working with some of the best: Carter Burwell, Danny Elfman, and we have a bunch of young composers on this film, Blake Mills. On this film we took a song that opens the film by Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce harmonising a capella to I Feel Free. But at the end it felt right that it should become a woman, because it's a woman who's now the godfather, the godmother at the end of the movie. And so we got Brittany Howard, the great singer of the Alabama Shakes, who had a song on *Silver Linings*. She was on tour here in England, and she recorded it a capella, and it's very powerful and beautiful. And we also had West Thordson and David Campbell as our orchestrators and composers on this film. So that's tough though, I understand why Quentin on *Inglourious Basterds* bought a lot of old score from old movies, that's almost easier you know than having to like explain to somebody, you've lived three years with a movie, why they should not now remake your movie, you know like in the last week of your movie. You know what I'm saying?

FS: We've got time for one more. And there was a hand just up there. Yeah, you had your hand up before, okay.

DOR: I'm just going to make a prediction: I talked too much about Led Zeppelin and some other things and there might be some guff about that, but hopefully it will all be beautiful.

Q: I had a question about *I Heart Huckabees*, I just wanted to know if you could talk about the writing process for that film, and just how easy it was to convince people to make it.

DOR: The question is about *I Heart Huckabees*. *I Heart Huckabees* is a

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blackout in my memory. It was at the height of my mid-life crisis and the beginning of my head up my ass period. After the success of you know first film, second film, *Three Kings*, now here comes your, "What are you going to do now," you know. And I overwrote that film, I overthought that film. I wrote that film ten ways. It was back to me before I did, remember I told you that film I kept rewriting, I did that again, and I probably produced 1000 pages. And they're all interesting and good, where was the instinct, I needed the instinct. Now through some luck and kismet it's the reason that Jennifer Lawrence knew who I was, because for some reasons people of her generation really like that movie and they tell me things about it as if I'm being told about a film somebody else made. And when we were flying over here she told me about moments, and it was as if I was, and it's kind of fun to be listening, I'd go, "I do not remember that scene, but that's really cool that you liked it." So to me, you know they took a chance on me, everybody took a chance on me. And I say to myself, somebody once said, "If you're really going to be an artist you must be willing to take a chance and not know what's going to happen." That was quite a chance that I did not know what was going to happen, more than I'd be willing to take again. You know I think we're privileged to do what we do, and I gave it my best, and there's some wonderful material in it, and I was inspired to write about a lot of beautiful things that were in that film and I think there's some beautiful moments in it. But I want to thank BAFTA for having me, I want to thank all of you for sitting here and coming out and listening to us. I want to thank you for making this set, they asked me what set to make and you made a set based on *Great Expectations*, which to me it's all very beautiful and I can't begin to express how grateful I am and how much I appreciate it, and how much I'll never forget it.

FS: Well, I want to thank you even more.

[Applause]