

## **Jake “Kid” Richmond Podcast Transcript**

*The interview excerpted here took place on November 10, 2010.*

Kid Richmond: I actually got in a car and drove out to LA and started banging on back doors. I actually went after the stunt industry.

Betty Belanus: How did you become aware that this was something that you could do for a living? Just by seeing it in the movies or...?

KR: Yeah, I think it was behind the scenes footage just kind of let me know there's really a group of people that give this trade to the film. I always just thought it ended up on there somehow, you know? Same way when you go to a restaurant and you order your meal and you're like, "the meal's here, I didn't see the kitchen but I know it came here somehow."

BB: So once you got to California, how did you know whose door to knock on?

KR: Yeah, it was one of those, okay here you are in this big city, you're lost and it's—it's almost like going to foreign country, and that was my first trip across the country as well—so all I could do was just start talking with anyone who was involved in the film industry. And someone said the only thing that I was actually feasibly able to do which was look in the directory. And I was like, that's all I gotta do is look in the directory. You go into it so naïve thinking that anyone that does anything with films is so prestigious and they would never list their direct number and it turns out they're just normal people like anyone else, you know? And they need to get work so they need to be found.

BB: So just the yellow pages? Or a specific film directory?

KR: Yeah, well, Los Angeles is actually big enough to where they have their own stunt directory.

BB: Oh.

KR: But, you know, every film office itself has a film directory. And really once you get on one film, it's kinda like that opens the door to just a whole avenue you can walk down and just kind of pick and choose where you wanna go, what direction you wanna take your career in. 'Cause you start networking with the right people and you're like, "oh you hear about this going on" and "that's coming to town," and from there you just overhear all these conversations. And you're like, that's how I do it, that's how I get involved. You never know where your next job is gonna come from. That's probably the biggest thing that hurts people in the film industry when they're just getting started is, you don't know where that next job's coming from. You know, just the other day I was in the dentist's chair and they go, "What are you working on now?" and I was like, "I don't know." And then that night I get a call to go work on a Bollywood production shooting up in Maryland.

BB: Oh, really? Oh my god!

KR: Yeah, it's all in Hindi. And they printed me out a script that's in English. But a lot of the stuff isn't translated over, so last week I'm out there trying to coordinate a fight between the two actors and

they're saying their lines of dialogue, and I'm sitting there going, "This other one's pissed at the other?" I'm like, "Yeah, all right I can see that. What's that last thing that he says before he hits him?" And they told me. They actually tried to teach me the line, which I forgot within like ten seconds of them trying to teach me. It's important for me to know that stuff, though, cause I gotta know the emotional range of where this fight's coming from because it's actually a fight between two brothers. And because it's a fight between brothers there's things—there's ways you would hit a random guy on the street that you wouldn't really hit your brother. Like you wouldn't go hitting your brother in the back or things like that, or I would hope not. But they wanted to keep this stuff kind of realistic so I'm like, "Okay we gotta digress for a minute and help me through this language barrier," which they were. I was surprised, I was waiting for them to be like, "Go home."

I noticed that a few years into doing the whole stunt thing when I realized, I guess when I washed away the naïve everyone in the industry is prestige, you know, can't touch 'em, I noticed that all they're doing is lending from all these blue-collar trades, whatever it is. Like with the ramps and the ratchets and the building the pipe ramps, you're welding, you're bending steel. But with the fire gel, you know, there's fire suppression technology out there somewhere. And you start to realize while you're working in that craft while I'm researching and developing these products I'm going, "Oh my god, you could use this stuff for film." I'm sitting here testing this stuff on my hand and going, you know this is to make sure soldiers stay safe but why can't you use this in film? And there's products that were already out there in the film industry, but just like anything else it can be improved. And with the fire burns they had so much room for improvement. You know we were able to take it to this level of, oh, we can set your skin on fire. Looks like you've got burning skin. In the horror genre they just love that, "Oh we wanna have this walking dead person; we want their head on fire" or something. We can give you that. They're sitting there going, "Like in post?" And I'm like, "No, we can do that, we can set their head on fire." And they're like, "Oh my god."

BB: Yeah. So what are some of your favorite jobs to do?

KR: Anything car related, really, is my favorite, just because I get a chance to tear stuff up. The car related stuff and anything where you can blow something up. And I think blowing something up just speaks for itself. Everyone likes a pretty orange fireball. Being able to work hand in hand with the special effects guys and gearing myself up and blowing myself up in a scene and then turning around and going, "That's me getting blown up." That's just a good feeling. It's the impressive scenes, it's the bigger stuff. Most of your career stuntmen that live in Los Angeles and live in New York, they're henchmen. They're usually the indie stunt guy in the background, you never see. He's one of fifty guys, he got shot, he can never really pick himself out, but he got the stunt pay. You know? You start looking at the different directions you can start to go with your career, and I decided a long time ago when I started with mine that I'm gonna learn what it takes to step up into coordinating and getting those big films because I know that performing, since I'm not gonna stay living in Los Angeles that I'm just gonna have to wrangle the films myself. And eventually get enough credits and start to get the credits bigger and bigger and bigger to where I can start going after the really large films. And then sort of put myself in the seat of the car and you know the Iron Man, the Bourne Ultimatums and Dark Knight, the big films that you wanna go to the movies with with your friends and say, "That was me!" You know? And that's just part of the glory behind it. There's a large amount of that behind it.

BB: Is there an award process for stuntmen? Is there a kind of the equivalent of the Oscars for stunts?

KR: Yep, there's the World Taurus Awards. And that's you know it's the same thing. You know, you got this great piece of art. This beautiful film. And there were stunts that contributed to its success. Why not recognize that? And so they brought about the Taurus award. And that's one of those things where I don't think most stuntmen in their career actually strive for that, but it's one of those things where if it happens along the way, what a "I've made it" moment.