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**Titanic Anecdotes**

**By Stephen Schochet**

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Studio executives in High Concept Hollywood have very short attention spans. When pitching a film idea, many believe if you can't do it in one sentence it is an unmarketable product. For example Planet Of the Apes (1968) starring Charlton Heston was pitched by producer Arthur Jacobs as "Moses Talks To Monkeys". Passenger 57( 1992) with Wesley Snipes was known as "Diehard On a Plane." Director James Cameron, despite a strong track record with films like Aliens (1986) and True Lies (1994) knew he would have a tough selling job after he went deep sea diving with Dr. Robert Ballard to glimpse the remains of the RMS Titanic. He became so emotionally involved by the experience that the sinking of the famous luxury liner in 1912 had to be the subject of his next picture. His pitch to the nervous executives at Twentieth Century Fox was, " Romeo and Juliet on a doomed ship." There was a tense pause and Cameron said, " Also fellas it's a period piece, it's going to cost \$150,000,000 and there's not going to be a sequel." Fox, a studio which had known great success with both The Love Boat (1977–1986) TV show and The Poseidon Adventure (1972) was dubious about the idea's commercial prospects. But wanting a long term relationship with Cameron they gave him a green light.

Previous movie versions of the Titanic had focused on the historical aspects of the ship hitting the iceberg, so Cameron decided to play up the fictional love story. After Gwyneth Paltrow turned down the female lead, Kate Winslet campaigned for it heavily by sending Cameron daily notes from England stating, "I'm your Rose." Her persistence led Cameron to invite her to Hollywood for auditions. One of her screen test partners Leonardo DiCaprio, impressed her so much she whispered to Cameron, " He's great. Even if you don't pick me, pick him." Cameron picked them both, but Leonardo was harder to convince. Playing a romantic lead in a blockbuster just didn't seem cool. Cameron told him, " I know what you want. You want to play him with a deformity or a limp. Well, it's lot harder playing a nice guy like Jimmy Stewart then one of those freaky, weirdo characters." Freaks and weird character portrayals often take home Oscars, but DiCaprio agreed to play the part.

For a major Hollywood production the star salaries were relatively low, DiCaprio made the most at \$2,500,000. The biggest expense of the film was building the ship, it required the construction of a

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entirely new studio in Rosarito Beach. Cameron's attention to historical detail was evident down to the carpets, the grand staircase, the Picasso paintings and the 1911 touring car that Jack and Rose made love in. But other aspects of the film were less accurate. There was no evidence that on the real life Titanic people in third class were blocked from reaching the upper decks and the lifeboats, the emphasis was on rescuing the women and children, the richest man on board the ship actually died. In the film, First Officer William Murdoch was portrayed as a coward who shot passengers, in real life he was a hero which caused James Cameron to apologize to his surviving relatives. And Leonardo's character Jack was based on an unattractive coal miner, who never left the bottom decks, let alone met someone like Rose.

Cameron, temperamental in the best of times, was surviving on three hours sleep and saved most of his screaming for the film crew. His philosophy was you couldn't get great performances out of the actors by yelling. In one scene, Winslet and DiCaprio were running away from a huge wave on one of the decks and the actress was submerged and nearly drowned. Moments after she was rescued Cameron

calmly said, "OK. Let's do it again."

As the costs began to mount along with the stories of the director's slow pace and temper tantrums, the Fox executives began to freak out. They suggested an hour of specific cuts from the three hour film. They argued the extended length would mean less showings thus less money. But long epics are more likely to help directors bring home Oscars, and Cameron was more defiant than DiCaprio. "You want to cut my movie? You're going to have to fire me!" You want to fire me? You're going to have to kill me!" The executives, knowing that starting from scratch meant their entire investment would be gone, did neither. They also rejected Cameron's offer of forfeiting his share of the profits as an empty gesture; they were sure there wouldn't be any.

With more special effects being added Titanics's release date was moved back from summer to Christmas 1997. At one point Cameron visited the Twentieth Century Fox studio headquarters to request permission to shoot additional footage and ran smack dab into company chairman Rupert Murdoch (no relation to William) in the hallway. After months of fiercely ordering people about, the self proclaimed "King of the World" could not look his real boss in the eye. "Uh hi. Uh I know I'm not your favorite person spending all your money. But I guarantee you the movie will be good." Murdoch, with a glint of steel in voice, replied. "Young man, it had be better be better than good!"

Thanks largely to repeated viewings from young girls, the film made more money than any other picture in history. It tied Ben Hur (1959) for the most Oscars (11) although it was not even nominated for Best Original Screenplay. The Fox Executives were more relieved than euphoric and promised no more \$200,000,000 movies, they felt like they had dodged a bullet. DiCaprio who infuriated the studio by refusing to promote the film and show up at the Academy Awards, became a \$10,000,000 per picture star, was chased down streets by adoring young females, and later called the whole Titanic craze, "kind of an empty experience". Winslet, who at one point during the shoot woke up and said, "God I wish I was dead", moved back happily into smaller independent films. Cameron got his original profit share and continued to lose his temper, suggesting a film critic who panned Titanic be impeached. He reflected later that movie prices had to be raised to fifteen dollars to pay for overblown budgets. "People would be mad for six months and then they would come back. Of course I wouldn't

want one of my movies coming out during those six months."

Stephen Schochet is the author and narrator of the audiobooks Fascinating Walt Disney and Tales Of Hollywood. The Saint Louis Post Dispatch says, " these two elaborate productions are exceptionally entertaining." Hear realaudio samples of these great, unique gifts at

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### **1st Class on the TITANIC----**

**By James Sorrell**

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\*\*\*365 of the planet's richest people, (including Bill Gates), have as much \$\$\$ as 2.6 BILLION of the poorest [which is totally obscene!!!]. That is only 43 more people than were in 1st Class on the TITANIC! [There were 322 of them] In order for these greedy rich to be so wealthy, they have to keep billions poor, many homeless! In this ordered Universe, there are specific blessings distributed by the 'Maker of All Things' to each of us; but the obscene rich have played the game of MONOPOLY for real and stolen away the opportunities of billions of people! They were initially given wealth as a shared trust, to see that all have some share in humanity {"Love your neighbor as yourself" means that you see to it that your neighbor has it just as good as you do; all 6 billion of us on this "blue marble" are neighbors & at least 33rd cousins---->Genesis 6:9 We ALL come from Noah's 3 sons!}.....We should ALL have a share in humanity, but the rich hoard instead of sharing, which was part of their deal that they ignore. In the USA, everyone (300 million) could be a millionaire if the rich were JUST

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millionaires (1 million \$\$ each). 'No poor, no homeless, no dis-enfranchised' is the possibility when opportunities are equal for all;  
the economy would be 90% better because everyone is a participating member,  
and there would be no theft [99% gone]! It is time to start the MONOPOLY game all over again!!! In the opening part of the original film, "Planet of the Apes", actor Charlton Heston states the reason why he left modern Earth in a spaceship, never to return... "Because brother goes to war with brother, and men do nothing while their neighbor's children starve". We didn't

come from animals, but began our existence as human; should we now act like the instinctual animals that live by "the survival of the fittest", where there is no love? Love is only something you can spend on God and other humans...you cannot spend it on yourself, or anything lower....that is not love; that is "self"! SEE---->"LOVE is the Real Thing" on <http://excoboard.com/exco/index.php?boardid=1979> or <http://keeperofflame.proboards24.com/>. "Poverty is the worst form of violence." Mahatma Gandhi [The father of India's freedom].....The 1st Class rich on the TITANIC learned the lesson of equality too late: when the ship went down, they all went down together, no matter where you were on the boat! Will the rich learn now, before it is too late....when the poor of the planet sink the ship by burning the loveless world down, each city, in one night....the fuse lit and the chaos spread by instant planet-wide communication of the beginning event??-----[From: "The Life of Emile Zola"....."You know that people don't want to see the starved face of truth; they would much prefer perfumed lies".]-----The conscience of man must have another moment in time; in OUR time!----by Jim Sorrell

Teacher: Keeper of the Flame, and Lover

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