Extra Naked: Mansfield Native Recounts Movie Extra Experience

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Behind-the-scenes look at life "on the set"

MANSFIELD, OH – For folks from the Mansfield, Ohio area, the filming of the 1994 Hollywood blockbuster "The Shawshank Redemption" was a truly memorable occasion. Much like Marfa, Texas, where the James Dean epic movie "Giant" was filmed and is still revered to this day, residents of Mansfield still remember the amazing experience of when Hollywood came to town. The economic, and even emotional impact of the movie is still being felt more than 20 years later.



Mansfield native James Pennington was an extra in Shawshank, and the filming of the movie continues to reverberate with him today. The general public was slower to catch on to the story, even with the film's impressive seven Oscar nominations. But as it grew in popularity over the years, it became a popular sleeper film and cult classic. Interest in the film has swelled into a bonafide tourism attraction for the region, with tours of various locations where the crew set up and shot the film acting as destinations for visitors to the area, including the Mansfield Reformatory, which served as the film's prison set. NPR recently covered this phenomenon, highlighting the impact the film has had on this gritty, small, rust belt town, and continues to have today – now, perhaps more than ever. To dovetail on the increasing interest, Pennington has decided to write a novel recounting his experiences during his 15 days as an on-set extra – one third of the film's total shooting time – including the time in which he stripped naked for scenes set in the film prison's showers.

Pennington's book promises to offer a unique viewpoint on what it's like to be a film extra, including the long shoot days, what happens on a film set, the hierarchy therein, and special

memories he made both on and off camera. As part of the film's cache of extras, he can also share unique memories and insight into locations perhaps otherwise overlooked, and can show off artifacts from the film's wardrobe that he's managed to maintain in pristine condition, even after all these years.
"It's safe to say that after my experiences, I never viewed movies in the same light again," says Pennington. "I vividly recall my experiences on set, which shaped my opinion of Hollywood and the movie making industry for the rest of my life."

Pennington is a life-long resident of the Mansfield area, and works as a computer tech for several area local businesses. He is a 1987 graduate of Malabar High School, attended The Ohio State University and graduated from North Central State College. He is raising funds to be able to devote the time necessary to complete and publish the novel, as well as to facilitate his accompanying visitors to the region on Shawshank tours, to which he will add his own particular experience and knowledge of the film's shoot at area locations. His Kickstarter page to raise funds for these projects can be found at: https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/402102072/book-i-got-naked-in-the-shawshank-redemption
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