

# Preface

Early in the morning 03:40 am. The artificial rain is pattering on the streets of New York City.

The stunt specialists built a ramp over which a cab is about to barrel in a breakneck speed in order to then fly through the air. In the movie the heroes that are fleeing from Godzilla are inside of that cab but during the shooting it's the stunt performers because this shot is quite dangerous. Of course you can't see the monster in this shot. It later will be added digitally...I've been a part of the filming for Roland Emmerichs Godzilla for weeks because I'm shooting a TV documentation about its development.

I'm really excited that it's about to go down. My cameraman has gone into position and even I'm armed with a camera. Nothing should go wrong by no means.

Then it finally starts. „And ... Action“, shouts the director. Hoops squeaking. The car goes off, barrels over the ramp and lands with a dull strike on the asphalt just a few meters away from me and my cameraman.

Right behind me where Emmerich and his crew were sitting in front of the monitors somebody screamed „Are these guys crazy?“ while the scene is being shot.

At that moment I sensed no good and sincerely hoped that he neither was talking to me nor to my cameraman. A few moments after the



Roland Emmerich mit Jo Müller

„Cut“ was heard the first recording manager already was standing in front of me. His face seemed petrified. He accusingly pointed at me and spit the worst words that one could be told during such a „Behind the scenes“-shooting: „You were in picture!“ My cameraman had to listen to the same.

The recording manager unmistakably explained what we where supposed to do now – instantly leave the shooting location! We hastily went on the run without saying a word.

I’m firmly convinced that this was the end for my documentation and that me and my crew could fly home.

In the afternoon I had a talk with Ute Emmerich who is his sister that participates as a producer at this project. Luckily she didn’t sent us home but explained us that this wasn’t our fault because they should have warned us. I can hardly believe my luck...

As we returned to the set later on Roland Emmerich caught sight of me, briefly paused, called me a „Troublemaker“ and started to laugh.

The matter is forgiven and forgotten.

By now I shot five TV documentations about the director and his movies and put countless radio shows on the agenda. For over 25 years I've been doing interviews with him, looked behind the scenes of his Blockbusters and regularly visited him in his dreamlike mansion in Los Angeles.

I have witnessed how he painstakingly tried to realize his first movies in the Swabian province, how he was showered with mockery and scorn by German critics and how he migrated to the United States, took root there and experienced his major success with *Independence Day*.

Nowadays he is classified as one of the most successful directors of the dream factory. Although he turned into a filmic and financial heavyweight he never changed his character and just remained the nice guy that he has always been. A down-to-earth, funny, extremely well-read and smart contemporary for which it's no problem to laugh about life, his job or himself. Of course he also has further traits just like his strong assertiveness. Otherwise he couldn't have done gigantic movies this successfully to such an extent for so long...

In order to approach his personality and his works one could have written a completely „normal“ biography that evaluates, classifies and interprets everything for the reader.

I have decided for a different type of biography because I believe that it will take you much closer to the person that is Roland Emmerich – and because it's much more fun: The various facets of his personality are supposed to be reflected in here with the help of different depictions and most importantly: Roland Emmerich is supposed to get a chance to speak!

The majority of the interviews are brand-new while others developed over many years and were left in their historically situative context.

Therefore I believe one experiences the development of this exceptional director up close and especially can gain your own impression of him.

That way you can find reports and meetings, conversations and analyses in this biography. Of course the book is also supposed to give useful hints to those who are interested in filmmaking. After all I still consider the book *Hitchcock/Truffaut* by François Truffaut as the best film book of all times.

Here you have the opportunity to look at the cards of one of the greatest movie magicians of our time and to get to know his tips and tricks.

Not least can this biography also impress in the matter of pictures with exclusive material: Roland Emmerich deigns a look in his private photo archives that his mother Hilde maintains.

From her I received dozens of family albums and many kilos of pictures for review from whose I chose the most beautiful and most important.

Now the journey may begin: Welcome to the movie universe of Roland Emmerich!

*Jo Müller  
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