

Homemade Hollywood

Fans Behind the Camera

Clive Young

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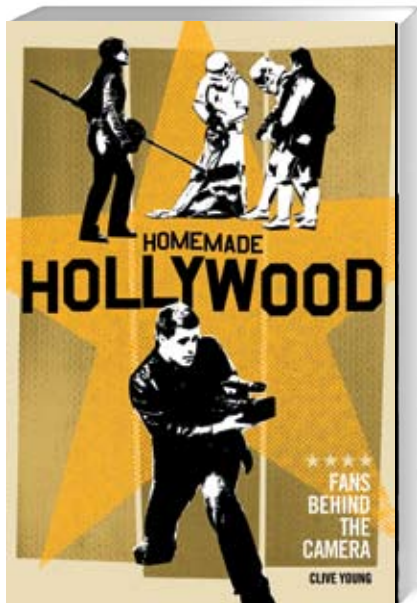
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A timely history of the phenomenon of fan filmmaking as the films themselves are becoming increasingly popular

Who would risk his life swinging six stories above the ground without a net, just for a homemade Spiderman movie? What would drive a young couple with a newborn baby to spend their life savings on a *Star Wars* film that has been seen by 4 million people—but from which they can never profit? And why would Steven Spielberg praise three nobodies for a home movie they made as teenagers in the Eighties?

They're fan filmmakers, creating the cinema of tomorrow: quick, bite-sized movies, starring world-famous characters from Superman to Captain Kirk to Lara Croft. The flicks are fun, free and totally illegal.

Average movie fans are starting a media revolution, taking characters worth billions of dollars and making their own new, often bizarre movies with them. In the fan film world, C3PO offers sex to a Stormtrooper; Batman meets the crew from Star Trek; and that's just the start. In these films and others, clandestine filmmakers are playing fast and loose with famous films, creating movies that fans want to see—and which copyrights, lawyers and common sense would never allow.

Now, thanks to Internet sites like YouTube and filesharing technologies like Bit Torrent, this controversial filmmaking movement is starting to rise to the surface. Hollywood is also taking notice: At the 2007 Sundance Film Festival, a documentary about making a fan film, *Son of Rambow*, sold to Paramount for \$8 million.

Until now, there has been no comprehensive book about fan films, covering the secret history of the burgeoning movement. There's no tome devoted to the controversies surrounding this unlawful brand of filmmaking and how they're already changing today's media and no guide that tells you which movies to search out—and which ones to leave hidden under their rocks. *Homemade Hollywood: Fans Behind the Camera* is that book.

CLIVE YOUNG is senior editor for *Pro Sound News* and has written for MTV.com, VH1.com, *Videography*, *Goldmine*, *American Songwriter* and many other outlets. More information on Young can be found at his website, www.cliveyoung.com.