

## Drop Back Ten

After the treacherous release of a second movie, I wrote Drop Back Ten. I knew it was not likely to be my third movie. It was more of a private scribbling down of a screenplay I didn't expect to make. But then I liked it and, with access to a tight but work-able budget, satisfied with a short schedule, pregnant with a third kid and, especially, armed with a truly great cast, I did go ahead and start shooting. How would we make a movie on the cheap head of a pin? I decided first of all that we needed physical limitations and, among them, I decided: no dollies. It would be a movie of still frames, with only tilts and pans, nothing more than the movement that cutting would provide (except in the very - very - brief movie within a movie, set on a football field. That movie would have used dollies and so, while shooting that section, we did too.) Could a project like this survive so little motion? It was written as a first-person singular script; so maybe it was meant to stand still. Even if that were a contradiction in terms for a movie, it seemed worth a try.

The five great movies occurring to me when I'm now asked to talk about Drop Back Ten, whose unstoppable smoke at least floated under the doors and around our feet while we tried to make something of nearly nothing, are the following:

1. **Day for Night**, in its fate of living under the spell of a mad crushing love of production.
2. **Irma Vep**, in its realization that the mad crushing love of production begins in the company of others who share the craving for being in it and the anticipated risk of being thrown out of it, for mastering the art of talking and moving fast combined with the art of moving hardly at all.
3. **The 400 Blows**, for bringing weightless and heartbreaking anger, and the frustrations of not mattering, into a movie's companionship with kids -- who know those feelings so well. I started Drop Back Ten as a story of adults locked in a battle of doing the right thing for a child who barely appears, who floats at the edge of the frames, if at all.
4. **Purple Rose of Cairo**, for its drunken love of movies as finished product, even when the real life surrounding the product is a cockeyed disappointment. And last but not least:
5. **Le Samourai**, for the glamorous stillness at the center of a main character's walk through a movie -- his elegant progression toward errors and toward a gap in the world where he, and we, had hardly hoped to find kinder resolution. And for its score.