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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: Steve Stockman Talks About *Two Weeks*

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Source: Evan Jacobs

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The director discusses his special film that has helped many people deal with loss

Experiencing the loss of a parent is never easy but first time writer/director/producer Steve Stockman met that challenge head on with **Two Weeks**. In this bittersweet comedy, four adult siblings gather at their dying mother's house in North Carolina for what they expect to be a quick, last goodbye. Instead, they find themselves trapped-- together -- for two weeks.

Do you think that *Two Weeks* would have been a different film if you hadn't lost your mother?

Steve Stockman: I think it's... yeah, there's a lot of stuff that goes on when a family goes through something like this that is surprisingly common to all families but we don't know about it. In today's society nobody really talks about what goes on at the end of life. You can find 395 books about pregnancy at you local bookstore and what to expect when you're expecting, but you can't find any good books about what to expect at the other end of life. So I think that my experience in going through it is not only what helped make the [film](#) interesting but also gives it what I hope is kind of a common truth. It's something that a lot of people go through, or have gone through, or at least know people who have gone through it. Yeah, I think it's very different than it would have been.

Did you plan to have the Discussion Guides on the DVD when you were making this film? How did that come about?

Steve Stockman: Well, the first job of any [movie](#) is to entertain. If we haven't succeeded in creating something entertaining then we haven't succeeded. What's interesting about the Group Discussion

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guides sort of comes out of two things that went together. One is that when we started to do screenings of the movie before it was released theatrically, people would stand up at the question and answer things that I went to and they'd go, "Gosh, I can't wait to play this movie for my book group." I thought, "Book group? I guess if it's something worth discussing you might as well discuss it in your book group." Then I was reading a book, *Life of Pi* over the summer and I noticed that they had a discussion guide at the end of the [book](#). Even though I'm not a member of a book group I thought it was a cool idea.

What for you was the most rewarding aspect of making *Two Weeks*?

Steve Stockman: I think that watching audiences laugh and cry with the movie is the most rewarding part of it. I think it's just great to be able to go to a screening and see people consistently go through a set of emotions and have an experience that I as the director kind of hoped they'd have. The movie is very, very funny in parts and it's very sad in parts. The fact that with an incredibly talented cast and a great group of people working on the film with me is that we were able to do that. We kind of walked that line between those two emotions. Seeing people react the way they do when they watch the movie is extremely rewarding.

The other thing that really stands out for me is we did our first screening at the Hamptons [Film Festival](#) in October, almost a year ago, that was the first debut of the movie just after MGM had picked it up. The film played and I got up to do the first Question and Answer session I had ever done on the film and the first person got up and said, "I went through this with my family but I didn't realize that everybody goes through the same thing." To me that was very powerful. If we can make films that help people understand shared experiences that's a pretty valuable function of film. Or, one of the valuable functions of film. I'm very gratified that we were able to do that.

Was it ever tough finding the comedy in this film amidst the tragedy?

Steve Stockman: I've been told I have peculiar sense of humor, but of course I live with it so it doesn't seem that way to me. I thought it was funny even when I was going through it 10 years ago in spots. I think it's fairly common. Human beings, certainly nobody wants to sit through an hour and a half movie that's relentlessly, hammeringly depressing. I didn't want to make one and I wouldn't have wanted to watch it either. At the same time we as human beings, when we're going through something like this, it's impossible or nearly impossible for people not to find some humor, some enjoyment, some weird thing that goes on that they're always going to remember during that. I don't think human beings are made for nonstop tragedy. Anybody with half of a sense of humor will find something funny even in the worst spots of their life. I certainly didn't have any trouble coming up with the idea. I didn't have any trouble pulling it off thanks to a very talented cast and crew.

What do you have coming up next? You talked in the commentary about independent movies being a pain in the ass... I was just wondering what you had coming up next?

Steve Stockman: Oh, somebody who actually listened to the director's commentary...

I go through these things, man.

Steve Stockman: I'm actually finishing right now, you just interrupted me finishing a children's fantasy, which is not an independent film; it's a very large film. I'm hoping to start putting that together as soon as I finish writing it. I've got some other ideas that are smaller. I think the corollary to independent filmmaking is a pain in the ass is that, if you're paying attention, you make tons of mistakes that you learn from them so that you don't have to make the same mistakes again. I like to think and I hope that I've learned something so that when I do make another, smaller movie I can do it better and it will be less of a pain in the ass.

Two Weeks comes to DVD September 18 from MGM Home Entertainment.

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