

= Ed Wood (film) =

Ed Wood is a 1994 American biographical period comedy @-@ drama film directed and produced by Tim Burton , and starring Johnny Depp as cult filmmaker Ed Wood . The film concerns the period in Wood 's life when he made his best @-@ known films as well as his relationship with actor Bela Lugosi , played by Martin Landau . Sarah Jessica Parker , Patricia Arquette , Jeffrey Jones , Lisa Marie , and Bill Murray are among the supporting cast .

The film was conceived by writers Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski when they were students at the USC School of Cinematic Arts . Irritated at being thought of solely as writers for family films with their work on Problem Child and its sequel , Alexander and Karaszewski struck a deal with Burton and Denise Di Novi to produce the Ed Wood biopic , and Michael Lehmann as director . Due to scheduling conflicts with Airheads , Lehmann had to vacate the director 's position , which was taken over by Burton .

Ed Wood was originally in development at Columbia Pictures , but the studio put the film in ' turnaround ' over Burton 's decision to shoot in black @-@ and @-@ white . Ed Wood was taken to the Walt Disney Studios , which produced the film through the studio 's Touchstone Pictures division . The film was released to critical acclaim , but was a box office bomb , making only \$ 5 @. @ 9 million against an \$ 18 million budget . It won two Academy Awards : Best Supporting Actor for Landau and Best Makeup for Rick Baker (who designed Landau 's prosthetic makeup) , Ve Neill and Yolanda Toussieng .

= = Plot = =

In 1952 , Ed Wood is struggling to join the film industry . Upon hearing of an announcement in Variety magazine that producer George Weiss is trying to purchase Christine Jorgensen 's life story , Ed wants to meet Weiss . Weiss explains that Variety 's announcement was a news leak , and it is impossible to purchase Jorgensen 's rights . The producer decides to fictionalize the film , titled I Changed My Sex ! . Ed tries to convince Weiss that he is perfect to direct the film because he is a transvestite , but is unsuccessful since Weiss wants a director with experience . Ed meets his longtime idol Bela Lugosi and the two become friends . Wood persuades Weiss to let him direct the film by convincing him that having a star in the film would sell tickets , and they could sign Bela for a low price .

Ed and Weiss argue over the film 's title and subject matter : Weiss has the poster printed , which Ed changes to Glen or Glenda and writes the film about a transvestite rather than a sex change . Weiss allows Ed to shoot whatever he wants as long as the film meets the required length . Ed takes to film production with an unusual approach ; shooting only one take per scene , giving actors very little direction and using stock footage to fill in gaps . The movie is released to critical and commercial failure . Because of this , Ed is unsuccessful in getting a job at Screen Classics , but Ed 's girlfriend , Dolores Fuller , tells him that he should try financing his next film independently . Ed is unsuccessful in finding money for Bride of the Atom , but is introduced to the psychic The Amazing Criswell who gives him advice on how to sell himself better .

Ed meets Loretta King , who he thinks has enough money to fund Bride of the Atom and ends up casting her as the lead instead of Dolores as planned . Filming begins , but is halted when it is revealed that Loretta is actually poor , and Ed has no money to continue production . Ed convinces meat packing industry tycoon Don McCoy to take over funding the film , who agrees as long as the film stars his son Tony as the leading man and the film ends with an explosion . The filming finishes with the title being changed to Bride of the Monster , but Dolores breaks up with Ed after the wrap party because of his circle of friends , his work , and transvestism . Bela attempts to conduct a double suicide with Ed after the government cuts off his unemployment , but is talked out of it . Bela checks himself into rehab , and Ed meets Kathy O 'Hara , who is visiting her father there . Ed takes her on a date and reveals to her his transvestism , which she accepts .

Ed shoots a film with Bela outside his home . When Ed and company attend the premiere for Bride of the Monster , an angry mob chases them out of the theater . Bela passes away , leaving Ed

without a star . Ed convinces a church leader named Reynolds that funding Ed 's script for Grave Robbers from Outer Space would result in a box office success , and generate enough money for Reynolds ' dream project . Dr. Tom Mason , Kathy 's chiropractor , is chosen to be Bela 's stand @-@ in for resembling Lugosi . Ed and the Baptists have conflicts over the title and content of the script which they want to have changed to Plan 9 from Outer Space , along with Ed 's B movie directing style , his casting decisions and his transvestism . Ed leaves the set to go to the nearest bar , where he encounters his idol , Orson Welles . Filming for Plan 9 finishes with Ed taking action against his producers . Plan 9 is premiered and Ed and Kathy go to Las Vegas to get married .

= = Cast = =

Johnny Depp as Ed Wood : Burton approached Depp and " within 10 minutes of hearing about the project , I was committed , " the actor remembers . At the time , Depp was depressed about films and filmmaking . By accepting this part , it gave him a " chance to stretch out and have some fun " , and working with Martin Landau , " rejuvenated my love for acting " . Depp was already familiar with some of Wood 's films through John Waters , who had shown him Plan 9 from Outer Space and Glen or Glenda . To get a handle on how to portray Wood , Depp studied the performance of Jack Haley as the Tin Man in The Wizard of Oz , and the acting of Mickey Rooney , Ronald Reagan and Casey Kasem . He watched several Reagan speeches because the actor felt he had a kind of blind optimism that was perfect for Ed Wood . Depp also borrowed some of Kasem 's cadence and " that utterly confident , breezy salesman quality in his voice " .

Martin Landau as Bela Lugosi : An old A @-@ list horror film actor whom Ed brings back into the spotlight . Rick Baker created the prosthetic makeup designs . Baker did not use extensive make @-@ up applications , only enough to resemble Lugosi and allow Landau to use his face to act and express emotion . For research , Landau watched 25 of Lugosi 's films and seven interviews between the years of 1931 and 1956 . Landau did not want to deliver an over @-@ the @-@ top performance . " Lugosi was theatrical , but I never wanted the audience to feel I was an actor chewing the scenery ... I felt it had to be Lugosi 's theatricality , not mine . "

Sarah Jessica Parker as Dolores Fuller : Ed 's girlfriend before his relationship with Kathy . Dolores is embarrassed by Ed 's transvestism , which leads to their breakup . Dolores later becomes a successful songwriter for Elvis Presley .

Patricia Arquette as Kathy O 'Hara : Ed 's girlfriend after his relationship with Dolores . Kathy does not have a problem with Ed 's transvestism , and is eventually married to Ed . Their marriage lasts until Ed 's death in 1978 . She never remarried . Arquette met her real @-@ life counterpart during filming . The actress found her to be " very graceful and very nice " .

Lisa Marie as Vampira : Hostess of the local Vampira Show . She is dismissive of Ed at first , but decides to join the cast of Plan 9 from Outer Space , on the condition that she have no lines .

Jeffrey Jones as The Amazing Criswell : A local psychic TV entertainer . Criswell helps Ed with usual production duties , finding investors and acting in Ed 's films .

Max Casella and Brent Hinkley portray Paul Marco and Conrad Brooks : Two of Ed 's all @-@ around production assistants and frequent actors . Paul is hired to find the Lugosi stand @-@ in for Plan 9 from Outer Space , while Conrad accidentally has a brief dispute with Lugosi during Glen or Glenda .

Bill Murray as Bunny Breckinridge : Ed 's openly @-@ gay friend . Bunny is assigned to find transvestites to appear in Glen or Glenda , as well as portraying " The Ruler " in Plan 9 from Outer Space . Bunny also has an unsuccessful sex reassignment therapy attempt .

George " The Animal " Steele as Tor Johnson : A Swedish professional wrestler hired by Wood to be in two of his films , Bride of the Monster and Plan 9 .

Juliet Landau as Loretta King : King replaces Dolores in the movie " Bride of the Monster " after Wood mistakes her for an heiress able to front the money for the production costs .

Ned Bellamy as Tom Mason : Kathy 's chiropractor who is chosen to be Lugosi 's stand @-@ in for Plan 9 .

Mike Starr as George Weiss : Foul @-@ mouthed Z movie producer known for his work on

exploitation films . Weiss hires Ed to direct Glen or Glenda .

Vincent D 'Onofrio as Orson Welles : Appears in a cameo late in the film . Maurice LaMarche did Welles ' uncredited voice .

Korla Pandit , credited as " Indian Musician , " essentially appears as himself ; Like he originally did on his 1950s TV program , Pandit plays organ and does not speak in this cameo .

The film also includes cameos from actors who worked with Wood on Plan 9 from Outer Space , Gregory Walcott and Conrad Brooks .

= = Production = =

Writers Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski conceived the idea for a biopic of Ed Wood when they were students at the USC School of Cinematic Arts . Alexander even proposed making a documentary about Wood , The Man in the Angora Sweater in his sophomore year at USC . However , Karaszewski figured , " there would be no one on the planet Earth who would make this movie or want to make this movie , because these aren 't the sort of movies that are made . " Irritated at being thought of solely as writers for family films for their work on Problem Child and Problem Child 2 , Alexander and Karaszewski wrote a 10 @-@ page film treatment for Ed Wood and pitched the idea to Heathers director Michael Lehmann , with whom they attended USC film school . The basis for their treatment came from Rudolph Grey 's Nightmare of Ecstasy , a full @-@ length biography , which draws on interviews from Wood 's family and colleagues . Lehmann presented their treatment to his producer on Heathers , Denise Di Novi . Di Novi had previously worked with Tim Burton on Edward Scissorhands , Batman Returns and The Nightmare Before Christmas , and a deal was struck with Lehmann as director and Burton and Di Novi producing .

Burton began reading Nightmare of Ecstasy and some of Wood 's letters . He was taken by how he " wrote about his films as if he was making Citizen Kane , you know , whereas other people perceived them as , like , the worst movies ever " . Burton admits to having always been a fan of Ed Wood , which is why the biopic is filmed with an aggrandizing bias borne of his admiration rather than derision of Wood 's work . The relationship between Wood and Lugosi in the script echoes closely Burton 's relationship with his own idol and two @-@ time colleague , Vincent Price . He said in an interview , " Meeting Vincent had an incredible impact on me , the same impact Ed must have felt meeting and working with his idol . " Meanwhile , Burton had been asked to direct Mary Reilly for Columbia Pictures with Winona Ryder in the title role .

However , Burton dropped out of Mary Reilly over Columbia 's decision to fast track the film and their interest with Julia Roberts in the title role instead of Ryder . This prompted Burton to becoming interested in directing Ed Wood himself , on the understanding it could be done quickly . Lehmann said , " Tim wanted to do this movie immediately and direct , but I was already committed to Airheads . " Lehmann was given executive producer credit . Alexander and Karaszewski delivered a 147 @-@ page screenplay in six weeks . Burton read the first draft and immediately agreed to direct the film as it stood , without any changes or rewrites . Ed Wood gave Burton the opportunity to make a film that was more character @-@ driven as opposed to style @-@ driven . He said in an interview , " On a picture like this I find you don 't need to storyboard . You 're working mainly with actors , and there 's no effects going on , so it 's best to be more spontaneous . "

Initially , Ed Wood was in development with Columbia , but when Burton decided he wanted to shoot the film in black @-@ and @-@ white , studio head Mark Canton would not agree to it unless Columbia was given a first look deal . Burton said black @-@ and @-@ white was " right for the material and the movie , and this was a movie that had to be in black @-@ and @-@ white " . He insisted on total creative control , and so in April 1993 , a month before the original start date , Canton put Ed Wood into turnaround . The decision sparked interest from Warner Bros. , Paramount Pictures and 20th Century Fox in optioning the film rights , but Burton accepted an offer from Walt Disney Studios , who had previously produced The Nightmare Before Christmas . Similar to Nightmare , Disney released Ed Wood under their Touchstone Pictures banner . With a budget of \$ 18 million , Disney did not feel the film was that much of a risk , and granted Burton total creative autonomy . Burton also refused a salary , and was not paid for his work on Ed Wood . Principal

photography began in August 1993 , and lasted 72 days . Despite his previous six @-@ film relationship with Danny Elfman , Burton chose Howard Shore to write the film score . Under the pressure of finishing the score for Batman Returns , the relationship between the two strained and Burton admitted he and Elfman experienced " creative differences " during The Nightmare Before Christmas

The movie was filmed at various locations in and around the Los Angeles area .

= = Historical accuracy = =

When describing the film 's accuracy , Burton explained , " it 's not like a completely hardcore realistic biopic . In doing a biopic you can 't help but get inside the person 's spirit a little bit , so for me , some of the film is trying to be through Ed a little bit . So it 's got an overly optimistic quality to it . " Burton acknowledged that he probably portrayed Wood and his crew in an exaggeratedly sympathetic way , stating he did not want to ridicule people who had already been ridiculed for a good deal of their life . Burton decided not to depict the darker side of Wood 's life because his letters never alluded to this aspect and remained upbeat . To this end , Burton wanted to make the film through Wood 's eyes . He said in an interview , " I 've never seen anything like them , the kind of bad poetry and redundancy ? saying in , like , five sentences what it would take most normal people one [...] Yet still there is a sincerity to them that is very unusual , and I always found that somewhat touching ; it gives them a surreal , weirdly heartfelt feeling . "

The scenes of Bela Lugosi used for Plan 9 from Outer Space were not filmed outside his own house , as the film depicts . They were , in fact , filmed outside Tor Johnson 's house . Additionally , Lugosi was not prone to fits of swearing , particularly in front of women and did not perform his own water stunt in Bride of the Monster . Lugosi is also depicted as dying alone and miserable . Lugosi 's wife of twenty years , Lillian , did leave him in 1953 , but he remarried in 1955 to Hope Lininger . They were together until his death a year later . This , plus any reference to Lugosi 's teenage son , Bela G. Lugosi , were omitted , as is any mention of Lugosi 's role in the 1956 United Artists film The Black Sleep . Also , when Ed Wood talks to George Weiss about making I Changed My Sex ! , Weiss mentions Chained Girls , implying that Chained Girls was made before Glen or Glenda , when in fact Chained Girls was made afterwards .

The scene where Bela is seen walking towards his house after Ed drops him off , he mentions how Hollywood has changed its horror films and how they aren 't what they used to be back in the 1930s . He mentions movies about giant bugs (Them !) , giant spiders , (Tarantula) and giant grasshoppers (Beginning of the End) , however these movies came out after when the scene was supposed to be set and after the release of Glen or Glenda .

According to Bela G. Lugosi (his son) , Forrest Ackerman , Dolores Fuller and Richard Sheffield , the film 's portrayal of Lugosi is inaccurate : In real life , he never used profanity , owned small dogs , or slept in coffins . And contrary to this film , Bela did not struggle performing on The Red Skelton Show .

Burton biographer Ken Hanke criticized the depiction of Dolores Fuller . " The real Fuller is a lively , savvy , humorous woman , " Hanke said , " while Parker 's performance presents her as a kind of sitcom moron for the first part of the film and a rather judgmental and wholly unpleasant character in her later scenes . " During her years with Wood , Fuller had regular TV jobs on Queen for a Day and The Dinah Shore Show , which are not mentioned . Fuller criticized Parker 's portrayal and Burton 's direction , but still gave Ed Wood a positive review . " Despite the dramatic liberties , I think Tim Burton is fabulous . I wished they could have made it a deeper love story , because we really loved each other . We strove to find investors together , I worked so hard to support Ed and I. "

= = Release = =

Ed Wood had its premiere at the 32nd New York Film Festival at the Lincoln Center . The film was then shown shortly after at the 21st Telluride Film Festival and later at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival , where it was in competition for the Palme d 'Or .

= = = Home media = = =

The DVD edition of Ed Wood initially had difficulty reaching store shelves in North America due to unspecified legal issues . The initial release had a featurette on transvestites ? not relating to the film or its actors in any way ? which was removed from subsequent releases . An initial street date of August 13 , 2002 was announced only to be postponed . A new date of February 3 , 2003 was set , only for it to be recalled again without explanation , although some copies quickly found their way to collectors ' venues such as eBay . The DVD was finally released on October 19 , 2004 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

Ed Wood had its limited release on September 30 , 1994 . When the film went into wide release on October 7 , 1994 in 623 theaters , Ed Wood grossed \$ 1 @, @ 903 @, @ 768 in its opening weekend . The film went on to gross \$ 5 @, @ 887 @, @ 457 domestically , much less than the production budget of \$ 18 million .

= = = Critical response = = =

Ed Wood received positive reviews from critics and has a rating of 92 % on Rotten Tomatoes based on 60 reviews with an average score of 8 out of 10 . The consensus states " Tim Burton and Johnny Depp team up to fete the life and work of cult hero Ed Wood , with typically strange and wonderful results . " The film also has a score of 70 out of 100 on Metacritic based on 19 reviews , indicating " generally favorable reviews " .

Roger Ebert gave a largely positive review : " What Burton has made is a film which celebrates Wood more than it mocks him , and which celebrates , too , the zany spirit of 1950s exploitation films , in which a great title , a has @-@ been star and a lurid ad campaign were enough to get bookings for some of the oddest films ever made . " Ebert and Gene Siskel gave the film ' Two Thumbs Up ' on Siskel and Ebert , with Siskel calling it " a tribute to creative passion and friendship " and " one of the year 's very best " .

Peter Travers of Rolling Stone presented Burton 's decision with positive feedback on not making a direct satire or parody of Wood 's life . " Ed Wood is Burton 's most personal and provocative movie to date , " he wrote . " Outrageously disjointed and just as outrageously entertaining , the picture stands as a successful outsider 's tribute to a failed kindred spirit . "

Janet Maslin , writing in The New York Times , thought Johnny Depp " proved " himself as an established " certified great actor " . " Depp captures all the can @-@ do optimism that kept Ed Wood going , thanks to an extremely funny ability to look at the silver lining of any cloud . " Todd McCarthy from Variety called Ed Wood " a fanciful , sweet @-@ tempered biopic about the man often described as the worst film director of all time . Always engaging to watch and often dazzling in its imagination and technique , picture is also a bit distended , and lacking in weight at its center . The result is beguiling rather than thrilling . "

Richard Corliss , writing in Time magazine , gave a negative review . " The script by Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski posits Wood as a classic American optimist , a Capraesque hero with little to be optimistic about , since he was also a classic American loser . That 's a fine start , but the film then marches in staid chronological order . " Corliss continued , " One wonders why this Burton film is so dishwatery , why it lacks the cartoon zest and outsider ache of Beetlejuice , Edward Scissorhands or Batman Returns . "

= = = Accolades = = =

Ed Wood was nominated for three Golden Globes : Best Musical or Comedy , Johnny Depp for Best Actor in a Musical or Comedy and Martin Landau for Best Supporting Actor . Landau won in his category , while Depp lost to Hugh Grant (for " Four Weddings and a Funeral ") . Landau and Rick Baker won Academy Awards for their work on the film . Landau also won Best Supporting Actor at the first Screen Actors Guild Awards . Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski were nominated for Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen by the Writers Guild of America , which was a surprise as few predicted that it would be considered . The film was also nominated for the prestigious Grand Prix of the Belgian Syndicate of Cinema Critics .