

= Joss Whedon =

Joseph Hill " Joss " Whedon ( born June 23 , 1964 ) is an American screenwriter , film and television director , film and television producer , comic book author , and composer . He is the founder of Mutant Enemy Productions and co @-@ founder of Bellwether Pictures , and is best known as the creator of the television series Buffy the Vampire Slayer ( 1997 ? 2003 ) , Angel ( 1999 ? 2004 ) , Firefly ( 2002 ) , Dollhouse ( 2009 ? 10 ) and Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. ( 2013 ? present ) .

Whedon co @-@ wrote the Pixar film Toy Story ( 1995 ) , wrote and directed the Firefly film continuation Serenity ( 2005 ) , co @-@ wrote and directed the Internet mini @-@ series Dr. Horrible 's Sing @-@ Along Blog ( 2008 ) , co @-@ wrote and produced the horror comedy The Cabin in the Woods ( 2012 ) , and wrote and directed the Marvel Cinematic Universe superhero films The Avengers ( 2012 ) and its sequel Avengers : Age of Ultron ( 2015 ) .

= = Early life = =

Born in New York City on June 23 , 1964 as Joseph<sup>1</sup> Hill Whedon , and being a third @-@ generation TV writer , he is the son of Tom Whedon , a screenwriter for Alice in the 1970s and The Golden Girls in the 1980s , and the grandson of John Whedon , who worked on The Donna Reed Show in the 1950s and The Dick Van Dyke Show in the 1960s . His mother , Ann Lee ( née Jeffries ) Stearns , originally from Kentucky , was a teacher at Riverdale Country School as Lee Whedon , and an aspiring novelist . His parents had both acted , and appeared in a play together at the Harvard Radcliffe Dramatic Club . Whedon is the younger sibling of Samuel and Matthew Whedon and older sibling of writers Jed and Zack Whedon . At a young age , he showed great interest in British television with shows like Masterpiece and Monty Python .

Whedon attended Riverdale Country School in New York City where his mother taught history . He then spent three years at Winchester College in England , where , taking note of omnipresent bullying , he concluded , " it was clear to me from the start that I must take an active role in my survival " . Whedon graduated from Wesleyan University in 1987 , where he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters in 2013 . There , he also studied under renowned academic Richard Slotkin . After leaving Wesleyan , Whedon came up with the first incarnation of Buffy Summers , " Rhonda , the Immortal Waitress " .

= = Career = =

= = = 1980s ? 1990s = = =

= = = = Early work = = = =

From 1989 to 1990 , Whedon worked as a staff writer on the sitcoms Roseanne and Parenthood . As a script doctor , Whedon was an uncredited writer on films like The Getaway , Speed , Waterworld , Twister and X @-@ Men . X @-@ Men reportedly contained only two dialogue exchanges of Whedon 's contribution , but the final cut of Speed left in most of his dialogue . At the same time as script consulting , he wrote Buffy the Vampire Slayer ? the film that would precede the series ? Alien : Resurrection and an early draft for Atlantis : The Lost Empire and co @-@ wrote Toy Story and Titan A.E. , the former of which earned him a shared Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay . Whedon has expressed strong dissatisfaction with the released versions of the films Buffy the Vampire Slayer , Titan A.E. and Alien : Resurrection .

= = = = Buffy the Vampire Slayer = = = =

In 1997 , Whedon created his first TV show , Buffy the Vampire Slayer.<sup>2</sup> The series depicts Buffy

Summers , the latest in a line of young women called to battle against vampires , demons , and other forces of darkness . The idea came directly from his aversion to seeing the Hollywood formula of " the little blonde girl who goes into a dark alley and gets killed in every horror movie " . Whedon said he wanted to subvert the idea and create someone who was a hero . This conception came from " the very first mission statement of the show , which was the joy of female power : having it , using it , sharing it " . The writing process came together from conversations about the emotional issues facing Buffy Summers , and how she would confront them in her battle against supernatural forces . Whedon usually directed episodes from his own scripts that held the most cathartic moments in Buffy 's story .

The series received numerous awards and nominations , including an Emmy Award nomination for the 1999 episode " Hush " . The 2001 episode " The Body " was nominated for a Nebula Award in 2002 , and the fall 2001 musical episode " Once More , with Feeling " was nominated for a Best Dramatic Presentation Hugo Award and a Best Script Nebula Award . The final episode " Chosen " was nominated for a Best Dramatic Presentation , Short Form Hugo Award in 2003 . All written and directed by Whedon , they are considered some the most effective and popular episodes of the series .

Buffy the Vampire Slayer was lauded worldwide for its influential themes and impact on popular culture . Scholar A. Asbjørn Jøn recognized that the series has shifted the way vampires have since been depicted in popular culture representations . Since the end of the series , Whedon has stated that his initial intention was to produce a " cult " television series and acknowledged a corresponding " rabid , almost insane fan base " that subsequently emerged . In June 2012 , Slate magazine identified it as the most written about popular culture text of all time . " [ M ] ore than twice as many papers , essays , and books have been devoted to the vampire drama than any of our other choices ? so many that we stopped counting when we hit 200 " .

A lifelong comic book fan , Whedon authored the Dark Horse Comics miniseries Fray , which takes place in the far future of the Buffyverse . Like many writers of the show , he contributed to the series ' comic book continuation , writing for the anthology Tales of the Slayers , and the main storyline of the miniseries Tales of the Vampires . Whedon and the other writers then released a new ongoing series , taking place after the series finale " Chosen " , which he officially recognizes as the canonical eighth season . Whedon returned to the world of Fray during the season eight story arc " Time of Your Life " . Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season Nine was published from August 2011 to September 2013 , for which Whedon wrote " Freefall , Part I ? II " ( with Andrew Chambliss ) .

== == Angel == ==

As a result of Buffy the Vampire Slayer 's success , Whedon was allowed the opportunity to make his 1999 spin @-@ off series , Angel . David Greenwalt and Whedon collaborated on the pilot that was going to be developed for The WB Network . During the series ' early expansion , efforts were made by the network to mitigate Whedon 's original concept . " Corrupt " , a precociously optioned second episode , was entirely abandoned due to the gloominess written into the script . The tone was consequently softened , establishing in the opening episodes Angel Investigations as an idealistic , shoestring operation . It follows Angel , who works as a private detective in order to " help the helpless " .

Though praised for presenting a unique and progressive version of the archetypal noir hero as a sympathetic vampire detective , it was criticized as being lesser than its parent show , in context of having been derived from a more popular original work . Despite this , it won a Saturn Award for Best Network TV Series and the three episodes " Waiting in the Wings " , " Smile Time " and " Not Fade Away " were nominated for Hugo Awards for Best Dramatic Presentation , Short Form in 2003 and 2005 .

The WB Network announced on February 13 , 2004 that Angel would not be brought back for a sixth season . Whedon said of the cancellation , " I believe the reason Angel had trouble on The WB was that it was the only show on the network that wasn 't trying to be Buffy . It was a show about grown @-@ ups " . An official continuation of the story came rather in the form of a comic book

series . Following Buffy the Vampire Slayer 's successful eighth season , IDW Publishing approached Whedon about similarly producing a canonical sixth season for Angel . Angel : After the Fall released 17 issues written by Whedon and Brian Lynch .

== 2000s ==

=== Firefly ===

Whedon followed Angel with the space western Firefly , starring Nathan Fillion , Gina Torres , Alan Tudyk , Morena Baccarin , Adam Baldwin , Jewel Staite , Sean Maher , Summer Glau and Ron Glass . Set in the year 2517 , Firefly explores the lives of the people who , on the outskirts of society , make their living as the crew of Serenity , a " Firefly @-@ class " spaceship . The series ' original concept progressed after Whedon read The Killer Angels , a book on the Battle of Gettysburg , and watched Outlaw Star , a space @-@ western anime that first aired in 1998 .

An ever present element was Whedon 's injection of anti @-@ totalitarianism , writing into the show a historical analogy of the Battle of Gettysburg , the " Battle of Serenity Valley " .<sup>3</sup> The beaten soldiers were called " Browncoats " after the brown dusters they wore as their uniforms . Whedon said , " I wanted to play with that classic notion of the frontier : not the people who made history , but the people history stepped on ? the people for whom every act is the creation of civilization " . Firefly was written as a serious character study , encompassing what Whedon called " life when it 's hard " , and in elaboration was about " nine people looking into the blackness of space and seeing nine different things " .

The fusion of American frontier and outer space motifs was not well received by critics , and despite critical praise in other respects , the show had an average of 4 @.@ 7 million viewers at the time and was ranked 98th in Nielsen ratings , which led to the series ' cancelation by Fox . Whedon took to Universal Pictures as a means of achieving a continuation of the story . Following Firefly was Serenity , a follow @-@ up film taking place after the events of the final episode . This developed into a franchise that led to graphic novels , books and other media . New Scientist magazine held a poll in 2005 to find " The World 's Best Space Sci @-@ Fi Ever " , in which Firefly and Serenity took first and second place , respectively . Since its cancellation , the series has attained cult status .

=== Marvel Comics ===

In 2004 , Whedon created the comic book line Astonishing X @-@ Men . He finished his 24 issue run in 2008 and then handed over the writing reins to Warren Ellis . One storyline from this comic , the notion of a cure for mutation being found , was also an element in the third X @-@ Men film , X @-@ Men : The Last Stand . In February 2009 , Astonishing X @-@ Men # 6 , which depicted the return of Colossus to the title , and concluded Whedon 's first story arc , was named by readers as # 65 in Marvel 's Top 70 Comics of all time .

Taking over after series creator Brian K. Vaughan completed his run , Whedon became the second writer of the Marvel comic Runaways . Having already been a committed reader , he had a letter published in the first volume , which was included in the Volume 1 hardcover edition . He also wrote short pieces for Stan Lee Meets Spider @-@ Man and Giant @-@ Size Astonishing X @-@ Men # 1 , and was the subject of an issue of Marvel Spotlight ( alongside artist Michael Lark ) . As part of a panel of writers , he contributed to Marvel Comics ' Civil War crossover event , lending advice in how to tell the story and how to end it . Whedon introduced several new characters into the Marvel Universe such as the villainous Ord , X @-@ Men Ruth " Blindfold " Aldine and Hisako " Armor " Ichiki , Runaway Klara Prast , and Special Agent Abigail Brand along with S.W.O.R.D. , the organization she commands .

=== Serenity ===

After Universal Pictures acquired the film and distribution rights from Fox , Whedon started writing the screenplay for *Serenity* . Transforming the series into a film , he says , " ... was the hardest piece of writing I 've ever done ... It had to be self @-@ contained and work as a movie , which meant I had to cope with problems like introducing nine main characters who 'd already met ! " The script was based on unused story ideas for *Firefly* 's unfilmed second season . On writing the dialogue , Whedon felt that part of it came from " getting to invent the language " , which " once I had ... reads like a kind of poetry " . The narrative centers on Captain Malcolm Reynolds as the hero accompanied by River Tam acting as the catalyst for what he does .

The score was composed by David Newman , and according to Whedon was intended to " deglorify space ? to feel the intimacy of being on a ship as opposed to the grandeur " . He used two long steadicam shots for several minutes of the film 's opening sequence to establish " a sense of safety in space " . In 2006 , it won a Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation , Long Form . The elements of science fiction that Whedon wanted to convey were essentially different in kind , and held " a sort of grittiness " and " realism " , which he said , together , " get the most exciting kind of film @-@ making " . Like *Firefly* , the film contained a statement on individual liberty . Critic Roger Ebert observed , " Like *Brave New World* and 1984 , the movie plays like a critique of contemporary society , with the Alliance as Big Brother , enemy of discontent " . The film received the 2005 Nebula Award for Best Script , the 2006 Prometheus Special Award , and was voted the best sci @-@ fi movie of all time in a poll set up by SFX magazine . There have since been multiple rumors regarding sequel possibilities .

The limited three @-@ issue comic book series called *Serenity : Those Left Behind* , the story of which was written by Whedon , was released in 2005 as a tie @-@ in to *Serenity* . Set between *Firefly* and the film , it was intended to bridge the two storylines together . *Serenity : Better Days* also spanned three issues , and was written by Whedon and Brett Matthews . Whedon later co @-@ wrote *The Shepherd 's Tale* with his half brother Zack .

= = = = Freelance directing and Sugarshock ! = = = =

As a guest director , he contributed two 2007 episodes of *The Office* ( " Business School " and " Branch Wars " ) and a 2010 episode of *Glee* ( " Dream On " ) . Denoting this period , Whedon has said , " I had free time , but I 'm pretty sure I mean my career was on the skids " .

In collaboration with Fábio Moon , Whedon created the free webcomic titled *Sugarshock !* , as part of the revival of *Dark Horse Presents* , which was launched on Myspace . Whedon later executive produced another free comic book on the Internet , *Serenity : The Other Half* .

= = = = Dr. Horrible 's Sing @-@ Along Blog = = = =

As a response to the 2007 ? 08 Writers Guild of America strike , Whedon directed , co @-@ wrote and produced *Dr. Horrible 's Sing @-@ Along Blog* . It tells the story of Dr. Horrible , an aspiring supervillain , who shares a love interest in a girl named Penny with his nemesis , Captain Hammer . To Whedon the miniseries was " a project of love " , an accomplishment that from their excitement would be embellished with passion and " ridiculousness " . His half brothers Zack and Jed and sister @-@ in @-@ law Maurissa Tanchoen share the other writing credits . Whedon said it was a " glorious surprise " to him to discover how well they worked together .

After having attended meetings with companies discussing the prospect of producing something for the Internet , and faced with negative feedback on his ideas , he realized that as long as the strike was still in progress , acquiring corporate funding was an unlikely prospect . Whedon funded the project himself with the investment of just over \$ 200 @,@ 000 , and earned more from it than he did directing *The Avengers* . He enjoyed the independence gained from it , as it provided him the freedom to include content without the expectancy of lessening it on behalf of the runtime . He and Jed composed the music , parts of which were influenced by Stephen Sondheim . Whedon was awarded Best Directing and Best Writing for a Comedy Web Series at the Streamy Awards , a Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation , Short Form , and a Creative Arts Emmy Award in 2009 .

===== Dollhouse =====

In 2009 , Whedon created his fourth television series Dollhouse , and explored themes throughout the show that were initially present in an unproduced spec script of his called Afterlife . The series follows Echo , whose brain is programmed to accomplish various assignments , on her journey towards self @-@ awareness . As stated by Whedon , Dollhouse was about " the sides of us that we don 't want people to see " , sexuality and , on some level , a celebration of perversion , which he equates to obsession , " the thing that makes people passionate and interesting and worthy " .

Despite low ratings in its first season , the series was renewed for a second and final season . The reason for the renewal given by Fox 's president of entertainment was to avoid any backlash that would have resulted from its cancelation . In reflection of Fox 's disruptive involvement , Whedon lamented the loss of ideas of identity and moral culpability , stating that they were dancing around them in the process which then devolved it into a procedural .

===== 2010s =====

===== The Cabin in the Woods =====

Whedon co @-@ wrote and produced a horror @-@ comedy film titled The Cabin in the Woods with director Drew Goddard , which finished production in 2009 . Whedon and Goddard both intended to make a film that concerned horror movies while still preserving the fun and frightening elements necessary to itself be a horror film . The script was written in three days , producing a minimum of 15 pages a day . Whedon described it as an attempt to revitalize horror , calling it a " loving hate letter " to the genre , continuing :

On another level it 's a serious critique of what we love and what we don 't about horror movies . I love being scared . I love that mixture of thrill , of horror , that objectification / identification thing of wanting definitely for the people to be alright but at the same time hoping they 'll go somewhere dark and face something awful . The things that I don 't like are kids acting like idiots , the devolution of the horror movie into torture porn and into a long series of sadistic comeuppances . Drew and I both felt that the pendulum had swung a little too far in that direction .

Part of what Whedon thought distinguished it from other horror films was that people were not expendable ? " As a culture , for our own entertainment , we tend to assume that they are " . He reiterated his sentiment that the introduction of torture porn into this genre was becoming an exercise in nihilism and misogyny as a means to promote distress instead of trying to scare you .

===== Marvel Studios =====

In July 2010 , it was confirmed that Whedon would write and direct The Avengers , a live @-@ action adaptation of the superhero team of the same name . On his desire to take on the film , he explained that the core of the movie was about " finding yourself from community " and the togetherness derived from a group that ultimately doesn 't belong together .

It became the fourth @-@ highest @-@ grossing film of all time at the North American box office , and received considerable praise from critics . In retrospect , Whedon thought the film had " imperfections " , begrudging its quality in comparison to that of The Matrix and The Godfather Part II . Nonetheless , he felt he " pulled off " the endeavor of making a summer movie reminiscent of those from his childhood .

In March 2012 , Whedon stated that although television involves more compromise than film :

I think , ultimately , gun to my head , TV is the place . Being able to spend years with a character , to really develop them , to understand them , to challenge the actor , to learn from the actor , to work with a team of writers ? that experience is so fulfilling . The idea of putting something out there and letting it grow is really exciting .

In August 2012 , Whedon signed a deal to develop the Marvel TV show Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. for ABC . The series focuses on the secret military law enforcement agency featured throughout the Marvel Cinematic Universe . Created by Whedon , Jed Whedon and Maurissa Tancharoen , the show involves individuals who possess powers within the spectacle of science fiction , while also focusing on " the peripheral people ... the people on the edges of the grand adventures " . The character Phil Coulson was resurrected after his death in The Avengers to helm the show .

Whedon spoke about certain complications that factored in with making the show for Marvel , noting confusion between him and the company regarding the degree to which they wanted him to create it , citing their demand that he prioritize Avengers : Age of Ultron . He eventually regretted his decision to bring back Phil Coulson , feeling that his death had lost meaning as a result .

Whedon returned to write and direct the sequel to The Avengers , following the deal with Marvel Studios , which expired in June 2015 . On the matter of approaching a sequel , Whedon reasoned not to go " bigger " , but " deeper " , and likened it to digging with a scalpel to cause pain . He said of the film 's characters , " Strong but damaged by power describes every person in this movie . It may , in fact , describe what the movie is about ... the more power that we have , the less human we are " . Whedon discerns that Age of Ultron " is an odd film " that proved challenging when it came to finding the rhythm between both its calm and exciting moments . Drawing parallels to a symphony , he wanted to bring about " grace in the middle of ultimate chaos " .

Whedon also served as a creative consultant on the films in the Marvel Cinematic Universe leading up to Age of Ultron . He rewrote some dialogue for Thor : The Dark World , directed the mid credits scene of Captain America : The Winter Soldier , and suggested that James Gunn make Guardians of the Galaxy " weirder " after reading an early draft . Whedon said it was unlikely that he would return to make another sequel , stating that he " couldn't imagine doing this again " . He remarked that not having created his own fictional universe in over five years felt wrong and intended to use the proceeds made from Avengers : Age of Ultron for such ventures . In January 2016 , Whedon announced that he will no longer work with Marvel .

=== Much Ado About Nothing ===

To create Much Ado About Nothing , Whedon established Bellwether Pictures . He filmed it in black and white on digital video over a period of 12 days at his residence in Santa Monica , California . The film was scripted , produced , directed , edited and composed by Whedon , based on William Shakespeare 's play of the same name . His idea to adapt the play for the screen originated from having " Shakespeare readings " at his house with several of his friends , years prior . Despite the play 's comedy , he discovered that there were elements in the text " of debauchery " that brought out a core darkness , and said the visual nature of film influenced him to permeate a motif of sexuality into the script .

=== In Your Eyes and Twist ===

Whedon wrote and executive produced the paranormal romance film In Your Eyes , the second feature by Bellwether Pictures . The film tells the story of Rebecca Porter and Dylan Kershaw who can feel each other 's emotions , but are ultimately strangers . Whedon 's script marked a theme of human connection as the metaphor for the couple 's mysterious link . He conceived the idea in the early 1990s , and had written drafts of the screenplay since then .

In summer 2014 , Whedon encountered artist Shawnee Kilgore on Kickstarter . Whedon funded her album and when Kilgore contacted him about his fulfillment reward , he suggested they make a song together . She agreed , and the collaboration was later repurposed into producing an EP .

At the 2015 San Diego Comic Con International , Whedon announced Twist , which was described as a comic book about " a Victorian female Batman " .

== Unrealized projects ==

Early in his career , Whedon sold two spec scripts that weren't produced , Suspension and Afterlife . He sold Suspension for \$ 750 @, @ 000 , with an additional \$ 250 @, @ 000 if production had commenced . In September 2014 , Empire suggested the script<sup>4</sup> was being made , with Liam Neeson attached to the project . In 1994 , he sold Afterlife for \$ 1 @. @ 5 million , with an additional \$ 500 @, @ 000 if production had commenced . In 2000 , Andy Tennant was in talks to direct and rewrite . In Afterlife there were precursors to themes Whedon would later explore in Dollhouse . The script was about Daniel Hoffstetter , a government scientist , who awakes after dying to discover his mind has been imprinted on a mind @-@ wiped body .

Whedon had a number of planned Buffy the Vampire Slayer spinoffs that became stuck in development or terminally stalled . Among these were Buffy the Animated Series , a set of television movies for The WB based on Angel and Buffy characters , and Ripper , a proposed BBC pilot about Rupert Giles .

Goners was announced in 2005 . According to Variety magazine , it was a fantasy thriller under development by Universal Pictures , and was to be produced by Mary Parent and Scott Stuber . From a 2006 interview with Fanboy Radio : " I've been seeing a lot of horror movies that are torture @-@ porn , where kids we don't care about are mutilated for hours , and I just cannot abide them ... it's an antidote to that very kind of film , the horror movie with the expendable human beings in it . Because I don't believe any human beings are " .

Whedon was hired to write and direct a Warner Bros. adaptation of Wonder Woman . However , in February 2007 , Whedon announced that he would no longer be involved with the project . " We just saw different movies , and at the price range this kind of movie hangs in , that's never gonna work . Non @-@ sympatico . It happens all the time " . Conversely , he stated , " the fact of the matter is , it was a waste of my time . We never [ wanted ] to make the same movie ; none of us knew that " . Whedon also pitched a screenplay to adapt Batman for the same company as development started on what would eventually become Batman Begins . It was described as having included a new , " more of a ' Hannibal Lecter ' type " villain , and portrayed Bruce Wayne as " a morbid , death @-@ obsessed kid " whose grief was overcome by protecting a girl from being bullied in an alley similar to where his parents were murdered .

The sequel to Dr. Horrible 's Sing @-@ Along Blog has been shelved on multiple occasions . In 2009 , Whedon remarked upon the possibility of presenting it in the form of another miniseries or a feature film . The script was planned to be written in summer 2012 and the principal photography to take place the following year . However , production was delayed because of his commitment to projects at Marvel Studios .

Wastelanders , a web @-@ based " end @-@ of @-@ the @-@ world " project , once in development with author Warren Ellis , was postponed due to Whedon 's preoccupation with The Avengers .

= = Themes , style and influences = =

Thematically , Whedon 's work features allusions to components in existentialism , anti @-@ authoritarianism , power , powerlessness , sexuality , adulthood , sacrifice , misogyny and feminism . His projects usually revolve around an ensemble of protagonists , primarily focused on a loner hero who ends up working with others to accomplish a goal . He says of the recurring aspects of community , " Everything I write tends to turn into a superhero team , even if I didn't mean for it to . I always start off wanting to be solitary , because a ) it's simpler , and b ) that isolation is something that I relate to as a storyteller . And then no matter what , I always end up with a team " . Examining a typical motif , he says , " I tend to write about people who are helpless or out of control who then regain or retake control " .

Articulating his approach to screenwriting , Whedon has noted outlining and act structure as the hardest parts of storytelling , but emphasizes that he feels they are " completely essential " . Many of Whedon 's altered phrases and heavily popularized words have entered a common usage called " Slayer Slang " , which PBS included an entire section of in their article series Do You Speak American ? . In an issue of Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season Eight , where Buffy travels to the future

, Whedon writes Buffy 's reaction to the future dialect of Manhattan ; this allows Whedon to comment on the series ' distinctive style of dialogue ; " Buffy blames herself for what 's happened to the English language , and there 's a lot of hubris in that joke . I like to think that adding Y 's to words that don 't usually have Y 's is going to destroy the whole fabric of our society " . His use of self @-@ aware dialogue to humanize characters , which relies heavily on dry humor and subtext , treating clichés subversively , using misogyny to define the trait of a villain , and the recurring theme of self @-@ sacrifice led by subverting moral icons have been defining to his style of storytelling .

His penchant to kill off characters has been widely criticized . Whedon has admitted extreme tiredness to the criticism , explaining , " The percentage of people who die ... is a lot . I think it 's pretty near everybody . The percentage of people that I kill ? not so many . I think the reason that my rep is so nasty is that I tend to do it ... unexpectedly , or to someone people are recently invested in , and that is a real mission statement for me , because , death doesn 't leave a card . Death doesn 't take Hitler . It doesn 't work according to story plans , and when a death feels like a loss , gives you grief ... then you have told a story that involves death " . Dramatic effect is used to convey the sense of realism and shock value that comes from fatal circumstances .

Whedon has kept ambivalent on whether to shoot on film or digital video , saying that he has " no allegiance to film as film . If the story is in front of me , I ? m fine " . In terms of visual aesthetics , he prefers to incorporate as many practical effects as possible when using computer @-@ generated imagery , so people " really don 't know where one begins and the other ends " . On working with high or low budgets , he remarked that both offer " the exact same job " and whether one has \$ 100 million or \$ 100 @,@ 000 , " you 're trying to hit someone in the gut with an emotional moment " . Whedon determines that , although giving actors notes for guidance , he also aims to assuage their concerns when communicating the reasons and outcomes of a scene .

Whedon has cited Ray Bradbury , James Cameron , Rod Serling , William Shakespeare , Stephen Sondheim , Steven Spielberg , Charles Dickens , Stan Lee , Robert Klein , Jerome Robbins , Frank Borzage , Steve Gerber , Steven Bochco , Frances Hodgson Burnett and John Williams as influences . When asked about his five favorite films , Whedon listed The Matrix , Once Upon a Time in the West , The Bad and the Beautiful , Magnolia and The Court Jester .

= = Feminism = =

Elements of feminism are present throughout all of Whedon 's work , which he gives his mother credit for inspiring . The character Kitty Pryde from the X @-@ Men comics was an early model for Whedon 's strong teenage girl characters . He said , " If there 's a bigger influence on Buffy than Kitty , I don 't know what it was . She was an adolescent girl finding out she has great power and dealing with it " . Kitty Pryde later played a central role in Whedon 's run on Astonishing X @-@ Men . In response to perennially being asked why he writes such strong female characters , he famously replied , " Because you 're still asking me that question " .

In college , Whedon studied the theory called " womb envy " , a concept he says observes " a fundamental thing that women have something men don 't , the obvious being an ability to bear children , and the resilience to hang in as parents ... Men not only don 't get what 's important about what women are capable of , but in fact they fear it , and envy it , and want to throw stones at it , because it 's the thing they can 't have " . In 2007 , Whedon expressed his outrage over the murder of Du 'a Khalil Aswad , and because the act was caught on video , was prompted to attack the underlying attitude he felt led to the murder , comparing the video to torture porn . He wrote , " [ Womb envy is ] entirely true . How else to explain the fact that cultures who would die to eradicate each other have always agreed on one issue ? That every popular religion puts restrictions on women 's behavior that are practically untenable ? That the act of being a free , attractive , self @-@ assertive woman is punishable by torture and death ? "

In late 2013 , Whedon spoke at an Equality Now event , where he issued a pointed dissection of the word " feminist " . He begins to say , " I have the privilege living my life inside of words ... but part of being a writer is also living in the very smallest part of every word " . Arguing against the suffix " -ist " , he continues , " you can 't be born an ? ist . It 's not natural " . Whedon explains that because of



this , the word " includes the idea that believing men and women to be equal ... is not a natural state . That we don 't emerge assuming that everybody in the human race is a human . That the idea of equality is just an idea that 's imposed on us ... " This sparked an unfavorable reaction from the feminist community , but also an appreciation for Whedon 's arguments ' thought provocation .

News website Digital Spy released in early 2015 an interview they had conducted with Whedon , during which he criticized the entertainment industry for its " genuine , recalcitrant , intractable sexism , and old @-@ fashioned quiet misogyny " . Whedon exemplified The Hunger Games film series as an argument for the female led franchise , and hoped Marvel Studios would be a part of undertaking the same bearing .

= = Frequent casting = =

Whedon often hires the same actors for his projects , and has been described as " the gravitational center of the Whedonverse , a galaxy that spins recurring actors and themes through an orbital system of TV shows , films and comic books that all share similar traits : a unique brand of witty dialogue , relatable characters and fantasy / sci @-@ fi mythology " .

Note : Due to the frequency Whedon casts the same actors in various projects , the above list only includes those that have played three or more different roles in a Whedon production ( actors that have only played the same role in multiple Whedon productions are not included ) .

= = Personal life = =

Whedon is married to Kai Cole , who is an architect and the producer and co @-@ founder of Bellwether Pictures . They have two children , Arden and Squire , and live in Los Angeles .

In 2013 , Whedon revealed that he suffers from workaholism . This arose during the time that followed the completion of Much Ado About Nothing , which was made in the span of a two @-@ week vacation from The Avengers , and after making the pilot for Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. amidst the pre @-@ production for Avengers : Age of Ultron . " It is actually a problem . Sometimes it 's adorable ... and sometimes it 's not ... Not to get all dark and weird , but it is something I need to address " .

= = = Religious and philosophical views = = =

Whedon has identified himself as an atheist and absurdist . In a piece by The Onion , he elaborated on the issue .

The Onion : Is there a God ?

Whedon : No .

The Onion : That 's it , end of story , no ?

Whedon : Absolutely not . That 's a very important and necessary thing to learn .

A committed humanist , Whedon was presented with the Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award in Cultural Humanism by the Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard University . He has also spoken about existentialism , explaining in detail how it , and more specifically Jean @-@ Paul Sartre 's Nausea , was used as a basis for the Firefly episode " Objects in Space " . He called it " the most important book " he ever read , and said it was handed to him right after he saw Steven Spielberg 's Close Encounters of the Third Kind , whose impact , he recalls , had made him an existentialist .

= = = Political views = = =

In July 2012 , at the San Diego Comic @-@ Con International , in response to one woman who noted the anti @-@ corporate themes in many of his films , and asked him to give his economic philosophy in 30 seconds or less , Whedon spoke out against both socialism and capitalism , stating that " ultimately all these systems don 't work " . He went on to say that America is " turning into Tsarist Russia " . Endorsing Barack Obama in the 2012 United States presidential election ,

Whedon satirically equated Mitt Romney 's future as president with a zombie apocalypse , " Romney is ready to make the deep rollbacks in health care , education , social services and reproductive rights that will guarantee poverty , unemployment , overpopulation , disease , rioting ? all crucial elements in creating a nightmare zombie wasteland " .

In 2015 , Whedon signed a petition as part of a political campaign calling for Elizabeth Warren to run for President of the United States . In observance of Earth Day , he spoke against climate change denial in a series of tweets , arguing , " The climate IS changing ? if we can 't , that makes us dumber than weather ? Policy makers who deny basic scientific truth should also be denied penicillin , horseless carriages , [ and ] air time on the magic box of shadows " .

= = Filmography = =

Whedon has written , directed and produced a number of films and television series .

= = = Marvel Comics = = =

Astonishing X @-@ Men vol . 3 # 1 ? 24 ( July 2004 ? March 2008 )

Volume 1 : Gifted ( collects # 1 ? 6 , with John Cassaday , tpb , 144 pages , 2004 )

Volume 2 : Dangerous ( collects # 7 ? 12 , with John Cassaday , tpb , 144 pages , 2005 )

Volume 3 : Torn ( collects # 13 ? 18 , with John Cassaday , tpb , 144 pages , 2007 )

Volume 4 : Unstoppable ( tpb , 192 pages , 2008 ) collects :

" Unstoppable " ( with John Cassaday , in # 19 ? 24 , 2007 ? 2008 )

" Gone " ( with John Cassaday , in Giant Sized Astonishing X @-@ Men # 1 , 2008 )

" Some Steves " ( with Michael Gaydos , in Stan Lee Meets Spider @-@ Man # 1 , November 2006 )

Runaways vol . 2 # 25 ? 30 ( April 2007 ? June 2008 )

Volume 8 : Dead End Kids ( collects # 25 ? 30 , with Michael Ryan , hc , 144 pages , 2008 )

= = = Dark Horse Comics = = =

Fray # 1 ? 8 ( 8 @-@ issue limited series , June 2001 ? July 2003 )

Future Slayer ( tpb , 216 pages , 2003 ) collects :

" Big City Girl " ( with Karl Moline , in # 1 , 2001 )

" The Calling " ( with Karl Moline , in # 2 , 2001 )

" Ready , Steady ... " ( with Karl Moline , in # 3 , 2001 )

" Out of the Past " ( with Karl Moline , in # 4 , 2001 )

" The Worst of It " ( with Karl Moline , in # 5 , 2001 )

" Alarums " ( with Karl Moline , in # 6 , 2002 )

" The Gateway " ( with Karl Moline , in # 7 , 2003 )

" All Hell " ( with Karl Moline , in # 8 , 2003 )

Angel vol . 2 # 1 ? 4 ( 4 @-@ issue limited series , September 2001 ? May 2002 )

Long Night 's Journey ( tpb , pages , year )

" Long Night 's Journey ... " ( with Brett Mathews and Melvin Rubi , in # 1 , 2001 )

" Rock and a Hard Place " ( with Brett Mathews and Melvin Rubi , in # 2 , 2001 )

" Thicker Than Water " ( with Brett Mathews and Melvin Rubi , in # 3 , 2001 )

" The End of the Beginning " ( with Brett Mathews and Melvin Rubi , in # 4 , 2002 )

Tales of the Slayers ( anthology graphic novel , tpb , 96 pages , 2002 ) collects :

" Prologue " ( with Leinil Francis Yu )

" Righteous " ( with Tim Sale )

" Tales " ( with Karl Moline )

Tales of the Vampires # 1 ? 5 ( 5 @-@ issue anthology limited series December 2003 ? April 2004 )

Tales of the Vampires ( tpb , 144 pages , 2004 ) collects :

" Tales of the Vampires I ? VI " ( with Alex Sanchez , in # 1 ? 5 , 2003 ? 2004 )

" Stacy " ( with Cameron Stewart , in # 1 , 2003 )

Serenity

Serenity : Those Left Behind # 1 ? 3 ( 3 @-@ issue limited series , with Brett Mathews and Will Conrad , July ? September 2005 , collected in Serenity : Those Left Behind , tpb , 80 pages , 2006 )

Serenity : Better Days # 1 ? 3 ( 3 @-@ issue limited series , with Brett Mathews and Will Conrad , March ? May 2008 , collected in Serenity : Better Days , tpb , 80 pages , 2008 )

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season Eight # 1 ? 5 , 10 ? 11 , 16 ? 19 , 31 , 36 ? 40 ( March 2007 ? January 2011 )

Volume 1 : The Long Way Home ( tpb , 136 pages , 2007 ) collects :

" The Long Way Home " ( with Georges Jeanty , in # 1 ? 4 , 2007 )

" The Chain " ( with Paul Lee , in # 5 , 2007 )

Volume 2 : No Future for You ( tpb , 120 pages , 2008 ) collects :

" Anywhere But Here " ( with Cliff Richards , in # 10 , 2008 )

Volume 3 : Wolves at the Gate ( tpb , 120 pages , 2008 ) collects :

" A Beautiful Sunset " ( with Georges Jeanty , in # 11 , 2008 )

Volume 4 : Time of Your Life ( tpb , 136 pages , 2009 ) collects :

" Time of Your Life " ( with Karl Moline , in # 16 ? 19 , 2008 )

Volume 7 : Twilight ( tpb , 168 pages , 2010 ) collects :

" Turbulence " ( with Georges Jeanty , in # 31 , 2010 )

" Willow : Goddesses and Monsters " ( with Karl Moline , one @-@ shot , 2009 )

Volume 8 : Last Gleaming ( tpb , 168 pages , 2011 ) collects :

" Last Gleaming " ( with Georges Jeanty , in # 36 ? 40 , 2010 )

Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season Nine # 1 ( September 2011 )

Volume 1 : Freefall ( tpb , 136 pages , 2012 ) collects :

" Freefall , Part I " ( with Georges Jeanty , in # 1 , 2011 )

Sugarshock # 1 ( with Fábio Moon , one @-@ shot , October 2009 )

Twist # 1 ? ( 6 @-@ issue limited series , forthcoming )

= = = IDW Publishing = = =

Angel : After the Fall # 1 ? 17 ( November 2007 ? February 2009 )

Volume 1 ( collects # 1 ? 5 , with Brian Lynch and Franco Urru , hc , 192 pages , 2008 )

Volume 2 : First Night ( collects # 6 ? 8 , with Brian Lynch et al . , hc , 104 pages , 2008 )

Volume 3 ( collects # 9 ? 12 , with Brian Lynch et al . , hc , 128 pages , 2009 )

Volume 4 ( collects # 13 ? 17 , with Brian Lynch , Stephen Mooney , and Franco Urru , hc , 132 pages , 2009 )

= = = DC Comics = = =

Batman / Superman # 26 ( with other artists , June 2006 )

= = Selected accolades = =