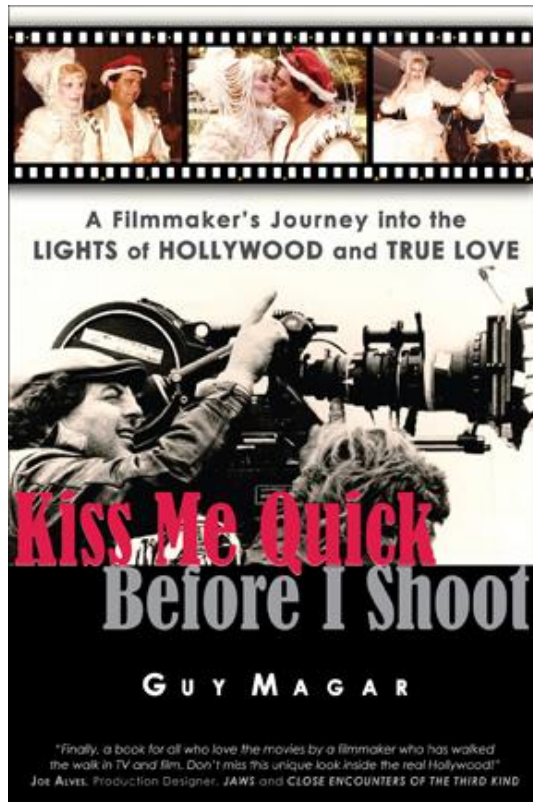


KISS ME QUICK BEFORE I SHOOT

By Guy Magar

(Sea Script Company, 312 pages, \$18.95)



Longtime feature and action TV director Guy Magar (The A-Team, La Femme Nikita, Fortune Hunter), who has run seminars for budding filmmakers and acted as a consultant to actors, directors, and writers for many years, offers a sprightly and entertaining memoir of his years in the business and of his fascinating life. Jewish-born in Cairo in 1948, the year of the first Arab-Israeli War, Magar's family emigrated to France after his father's clothing factory was confiscated by Gen. Nasser in 1958.

After a peripatetic education, first a degree in philosophy from Rutgers in the early '60s, then studies at AFI and the London Film School (where he won an award for an early documentary short), he has worked in movies and TV ever since. Apart from dispensing invaluable advice on becoming a filmmaker, which he does on almost every page, he explains the differences between directing no-budget B movies and working on sitcoms and daytime dramas.

He recalls the relative luxury directing a miniseries compared with the 60-pages-a-day, five-days-a-week grind of soap operas, and the joys of working on a hit TV series. Magar also has a fund of great stories to share, naming and shaming his more wearisome performers while giving fulsome praise to his friends. One of them is James Cameron, who was production designer and creature creator on Magar's aborted first feature, Shriek.

As well as being invaluable to the aspiring filmmaker looking for a real taste of life on set and in the editing room, Magar's memoir also includes the story of his long, happy marriage and of his wife's harrowing near-death bout with leukemia in the late 2000s. Throughout triumph and near-tragedy, however, Magar never loses his warmth and sense of the ridiculous. He sounds like great company, and his book is a riot.

Review by John Patterson