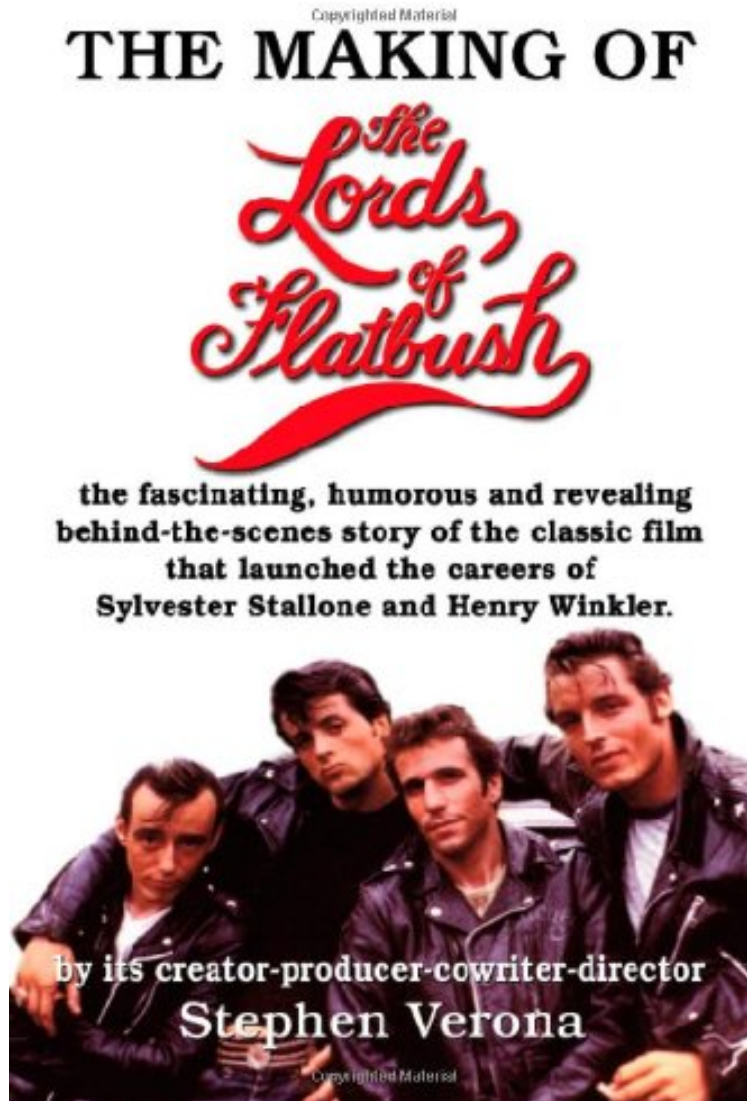


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## The Making of The Lords of Flatbush

*Stephen Verona*

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**Stephen Verona : The Making of The Lords of Flatbush** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Making of The Lords of Flatbush:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The movie that changed my life forever! By Customer Stephen Verona, you changed my life and my 3 friends forever! The Lords of Flatbush came at a time in our lives when we were searching for an identity. All the others in our High School in Oceanside, NY were in Fraternity's and we just didn't fit the "mold." We felt we had some abilities to sing, drink beer and crack a few heads. We BECAME The Lords. Using a version of the the logo, I was Bobo, Mike was Daddio, Steve, Reno, Dom, Mimmo and we sang

Acappella, went to see the Lords of Flatbush about 15 times and had hero's in the early 70's. See this [...] to find out what this dream allowed us to do. We believed in this man's (Verona's) movie of a youths on the verge of manhood. We kept at it for 15 years, never changed the line-up and loved and fought each other at every turn in life's road. I am so glad the story was written. I lived verona's youth in the 70's and 80's, got married, watched a family grow and was still a LORD! Thank you Stephen. The book is an amazing recounting of what one man and budding stars went through to ensure dreams weren't crushed. Mine grew from this account and for this I am eternally grateful. We must meet some day to share the second coming of the Lord's of Flatbush! Look for a reunion, July 2, 2010 at Johnny Russell's Oceanside Cafe. Bobo0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Awesome buy, awesome to deal with By adriane Great price, item arrived on time, clean and as described. Couldnt ask for better ! Great Seller! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Terry Bellando A down to earth, very interesting, from the heart book.

From the original idea through the pain of raising money and the rigors of independent film production to the film's instant success and the joy it brought when it was sold to Columbia Pictures and topped the box office as the biggest grossing film in release, *The Making of The Lords of Flatbush* tells a sometimes hilarious and often dramatic, but never uneventful story. For dollar invested to dollar returned, "The Lords of Flatbush" was one of the biggest money making films of all time. The book reveals how everyone involved went on to become legends in their field: From Sylvester Stallone who went on to become Rocky to Henry Winkler who became the Fonz, to Richard Gere who was the original lead to Bette Midler whose manager pulled her out at the last minute. This film started a cultural revolution with the TV shows that it inspired. *Happy Days*, *Laverne Shirley* and *Welcome Back Kotter*, all found their inspiration in this first truly independent motion picture.

This is a behind the scenes look at the making of the movie. The amazingly talented Stephen Verona shares the nitty gritty details of the classic film, raising the money, hiring the actors, making the movie, distributing it etc. Great read for fans of the movie or anyone interested in how a movie gets made based on someone's dream and desire and goes on to become the highest grossing box office hit of the time. --This is written in the style I prefer, which comes off more like a conversation with the author, rather than some kind of piece of creative writing. Because of this, it makes for a very quick and fluid read! The story pretty much sticks to the important elements that went into creating, writing, and making the movie. This can be for example: comparing one of the characters in the film to someone Verona grew up with, and how he drew from those experiences to create the story, to the numerous deals he had to make to fund the project. It's all relevant to the making of the film, and for me, it's added a whole new perspective to a movie I've loved and watched for years on cable, without knowing all that went into it! It's filled with some great pictures not seen before, taken by the author himself, and worth the price just for that alone. Buy it! You'll find out things like what happened to Richard Gere to get him fired from the project, to stories of early Hollywood and how small the business really was still in the seventies. --About the Author Stephen Verona is a rare 20th Century artist. Born in Illinois and raised in Brooklyn, New York, and traveled about the world, his art and films reflect his astute observations. Some critics have said he is between Hockney and Hopper. His paintings with light, color and faces are unique and original. He has been painting since he was two, when he put his fingers in shoe polish and rubbed it on the wall. While in High School, he attended the Brooklyn Museum school, which he credits along with The School of Visual Arts for changing him from his rebellious black leather to artistic corduroy. He painted, sculpted, photographed and made films. One of his photographs was given the Edward Steichen award from the Museum of Modern Art. Five of his films have been accepted there and in the Library of Congress. He began his career in advertising as an art director and producer. Eventually he became a co-creative director of Ogilvy Mather. He left there to direct commercials. It was on location in England for Ford that he met John Lennon. Lennon gave him the rights to the Beatle tune *I Feel Fine*, which Verona animated. He and Lennon sat coloring in the drawings. When the film was finished John took Verona up to Columbia Records where he was offered anyone on the label to work with. He chose Barbra Streisand. He began doing the film of *My Coloring Book* when Columbia announced that they didn't know how much control they had over her and cancelled the film. But Verona went on to complete it anyway and it has been in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Animation Festival and the Library of Congress. These two shorts were considered by many as the first music videos. He went on from there to work with The Lovin Spoonfull, Boy George, Mick Fleetwood, Natalie Cole, Chicago, Streisand again, Simon Garfunkel, and many more. During this period Verona became intrigued with stories, both still and moving, and became Lee Strasberg's directing protege in the Actor's Studio. They did not get along, and after two years Verona left. He made a 17 minute film about his experience there. Three years later, *The Rehearsal* was nominated for an Academy Award. Lee Strasberg was the 3rd person to call and congratulate him. Verona told Strasberg that he had written a movie that Strasberg would be great in. Strasberg read the script and accepted the role. It took Verona 7 years to raise the money to make his film *Boardwalk*. Between 1970-1972, before there was such a thing as music videos, Verona was the exclusive provider of musical promotional films for Columbia, and Epic records. He also did videos for Atlantic, UA, and Buddah records, all the while painting and harboring that secret desire to make a movie. One day he looked in his refrigerator and saw thousands of feet of 16

millimeter film. He had his own camera and sat down and wrote his first feature film, "The Lords of Flatbush"; It was the launching of Sylvester Stallone, Henry Winkler, Armand Assante, Perry King, and Richard Gere who was later replaced. He later went on to direct his directing teacher and mentor Lee Strasberg. He wrote and directed Strasberg, Ruth Gordon and Janet Leigh in the highly acclaimed film Boardwalk. The distributor sadly went under. But his film career was launched. Mr. Verona was recently honored by being one of three living artists invited to attend and exhibit at the Fine Art Dealers Association of America's annual exhibition. Verona has won over 100 awards for his prolific art and films as well as invited to Rome for a private audience in Vatican City with His Holiness Pope Benedicte XVI in the Sistine Chapel, part of a select group of artists from five continents to be received by the Pope. He is in outstanding collections throughout the world.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.From the preface to The Making of The Lords Of Flatbush Sanity Check - Why do a feature film in the first place? What possesses someone to want to make a feature film? That is a very difficult question to answer. I can only tell you that you have to be a little crazy, very driven, definitely young, brash and a dreamer to even contemplate making a film, let alone being independently wealthy and totally stubborn. Having rich parents will definitely help along the way. I have many of those qualities except for the key one, rich parents. I should also add another key to making a film and that is desperation. When you think that there is nothing left for you in life unless you make this film, then you have to make it. Otherwise you could regret it and that is worse than having made even a bad film. I know there are those age old tired sayings like "nothing ventured nothing gained," but it is true. And I knew I had to change my life. I was not happy doing what I was doing, but I wasn't sure how to go about changing it. Perhaps if I knew then what I know now, I might not have gone through with it. But thankfully my desire prevailed, and the good memories far outweigh the bad. With 20 / 20 Monday morning hindsight, I will try and bring all of those dark days back, the good, the bad, and very ugly. Especially the ones that changed my life forever. I had been an art student who was inspired by the great foreign directors such as Fellini, Bergman, Antonioni, Kurosawa. I saw personal expression and style and great art in their now classic films. I wanted to be one of them. Living in New York City in the late 1950's and early 60's, there was no real film business. There was no place one could go and get a job even at entry level positions to work up towards your goal. If you wanted to be in the movies you went to Hollywood. There was no other choice. All the films that we were seeing in our neighborhood theaters came from Hollywood, unless they were foreign films and for those we went to the grungy art houses. There was also no place to learn to make movies except at New York University. But even there you had to take other liberal arts subjects. Making movies was not a career. It was something that magically happened out in Hollywood, rarely in New York. No one we knew was in or related to the movie business. So how do you get started? I had bought a 16mm Bolex spring wound camera while still in art school at the School of Visual Arts. I started to shoot visuals that interested me. I would find music and cut the pictures to the rhythm of the music. Rarely did I tell a linear story. To support myself I worked in advertising as an art director and producer of commercials. This became my on the job training. But even that didn't prepare me for the grueling experience of making my first feature film. In retaliation to the Hollywood fare, New York's underground cinema was born. And with that an amazing blend of talent emerged. Underground films were either good or bad depending on the director. There was no studio involvement. The director was king. And the director was who told the story. From Orson Welles to Alfred Hitchcock who made it in the system, New York filmmakers emulated their successes. We all wanted to make personal statements with beautiful visuals, and engrossing tales with memorable musical accompaniment. That was our dream and a dream it was for years and years. And so it began...