

Twin Peaks DVDs! Mulholland Drive! The X-Files!

Wrapped in Plastic

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David Lynch Interview!



Wrapped in Plastic

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Front cover of David Lynch: photo by Melissa Moseley © 2001 Universal Studios

Back cover of Naomi Watts and Laura Elena Harring from *Mulholland Drive*: photo by Melissa Moseley © 2001 Universal Studios

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Richard Green Interview

His “Mulholland Drive” character the Magician may have said it best:

“It’s all an illusion!”

“Hay no banda! There is no band! It’s all an illusion!” With these few lines in the Club Silencio section of Mulholland Drive, the Magician may very well sum up one of the major themes of the film. And part of the power of that memorable scene results from Richard Green’s extraordinary rendition. Just as Al Strobel’s “fire walk with me” line resonates in Twin Peaks, Green’s vocal and visual performance of “Hay no banda” carries a mystery that lingers long after the film is over.

What we didn’t realize before interviewing Richard Green was that his association with Lynch dates back to the Eraserhead days, so the conversation provided additional treats. We also hadn’t seen his two films, the Jack Nance documentary I Don’t Know Jack and the swing film 7 Year ZigZag. Since viewing those two works (see the accompanying reviews), our respect for Green’s talent has increased even more.

Craig Miller interviewed Richard on October 29, 2001. John Thorne did the transcription, which was edited by John and Craig. Our thanks to Richard Green for granting a generous amount of time and telling so many great stories of his work on Mulholland Drive and his other projects.

Miller: How did you get involved with Mulholland Drive?

Green: It actually goes a ways back. I met David when he was shooting *Eraserhead*. I was in a theater company in San Francisco called Theater of Marbles, which I started with Donna DuBain. It came into being a year or two after another company called Circus had folded. In Circus was Catherine Coulson and Jack Nance and other actors who ended up in *Eraserhead*. Robert Altman had seen a show that the original Circus company had done in Los Angeles and wanted everyone to come up and be the townspeople in *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*. It kind of broke up the company—some people went, and some people didn’t. When we started our company in San Francisco, all of a sudden everybody who had been in Circus was a part of the new company. We stayed up there a couple of years, and then I came down to LA. I was twenty and on my way to Europe. I started to hang out with Jack and David and

Catherine up in their place at Beachwood. David, to me, was Jimmy Stewart—he dressed like Jimmy Stewart, he talked like Jimmy Stewart, he kind of looked like Jimmy Stewart. He was a really nice guy. I had no idea what *Eraserhead* was about. I was there for about two or three months, then I went off to Europe for a year. I came back and went to Cal Arts, and the next time I saw David was at the world’s first premiere screening of *Eraserhead*—it was at the Graystone Mansion. Donna DuBain was working at AFI and called me and told me David was screening the movie. When I saw *Eraserhead* it just gave me nightmares. I was shocked. It was my worst dreams all on film.

Then I don’t think I saw David for twenty-five years. It was when Jack Nance died. There was a memorial for Jack. David had asked how I knew all the people there, and I told him about my early acting career, and also that I had been a magician as a kid. I had a designed a twelve foot gallows to hang myself, but I never had a chance to build it. Two years later I get a call from David. It was my birthday, and we had just decided to do the film *I Don’t Know Jack*, and we had contacted Catherine Coulson. She called back, and I assumed it was about our film. I asked Donna about the call, and she said it had nothing to do with *Jack*—David’s office had called Catherine looking for a guy “we all know and who was real good with words and used to be a magician!” And we couldn’t figure out who he was looking for! I thought, “Could it be me? Nah, it’s not me! David’s calling me for a movie after twenty-five years!?” [Laughter] We went back through Catherine, who called the production manager, who called me back. And then David called.

It was a wonderful conversation. It was so David Lynch: “I’ve wanted to work with you for twenty-five years, and I’ve got the part for you. Can you work on Monday?” Then he told me, “It’s a real dark magician. It’s real key to the movie, and it’s a ‘closed end’—if it doesn’t go to series this is the ending of the European version.” So I knew I wasn’t going to be in it if it went to series. He also said, “The part is in English, but I kind of have a vision of it being in French and Spanish as well.” I said,

“David, it’s Friday afternoon. Do you have a translator?” He said, we’ll see what we can work out.

After the script arrived the next morning, I tried to call David but couldn’t reach him. So I thought, “I’ll have to translate it.” So I got on the phone with a friend of mine who was fluent in French and literally read him the part. He translated it and spelled it out, and then I recorded him saying it so I would have a reference. I did the same thing with a Spanish translator. Then I re-typed the whole script, so there were David’s original lines and then the French and then the Spanish. Now I’m sitting here trying to learn a script that’s in three languages! I’m going to arrive on the set Monday morning, and I’ve never worked with David, but if he’s like anyone I’ve ever worked with, there is not going to be any time for us to sit down and figure out which lines are Spanish and which lines are French. I better come up with some kind of concept. I’m a writer, and I basically went through it and chose when to say French and when to say Spanish, how to structure it, came up with a couple of ideas, did costuming that Saturday afternoon, arrived on Monday morning, handed David the full translation and said, “I’ve kind of got this approach.” It was the greatest experience I’ve ever had on a set in my life. He dug what I was doing. I dug the direction he wanted me to go in. We just had a ball. It was just amazing.

CM: I had seen the character described as a magician, but he seems to me more like a master of ceremonies, or a host of the production at Club Silencio. How did Lynch describe the role?

RG: It’s definitely called “The Magician” in the script and on the credits. There is actually an emcee who comes out after me, played by Geno Silva. He introduces Rebekah Del Rio. Yet the character isn’t so much of a magician, I agree, as more of a malevolent master of ceremonies who tells you what you will see and what you won’t see. Things like the appearing cane is an old gag of mine which David dug.

CM: The Club Silencio begins a dramatic shift in the film. Up until then most of the scenes are fairly naturalistic, and then after Club Silencio things begin to get surreal. I see the Club as playing a similar role as

MULHOLLAND DR.



Richard Green The Magician

the Red Room did in *Twin Peaks* where it was straddling the line between the real world and the dream world. Did you see the club in similar terms?

RG: At the time we shot it I had no context because David would not let me read the script. So I didn't know. I understood it would be the ending of the original movie concept. An interesting side note: David had me go to a creature factory—one of the places that makes rubber masks and body pieces for Hollywood—and they did an upper-body cast of me. The gag was supposed to be that, at the end of the scene where I give that arch look and there's blue light, I was supposed to burst into flame. The first time I saw the film I thought, "What happened?" I never asked David about it, but I will one day. I flatter myself, sometimes, by thinking that if they had cut to the dummy they wouldn't have had that long, lingering look which is so portentous at that moment in the film.

They quoted me in *Filmmaker Magazine* as saying, "Personally, I think, the key to the film is the line, 'We have no band; this is all an illusion.'" They quoted me in the magazine, and I hope David forgives me! [Laughter] I think you're accurate. The scene does signal the shift to where Naomi [Watts]'s personal insanity starts playing out in the outside world. Up until

that point there's nothing really weird that happens to the two of them—with the exception of the dead body.

CM: There is also the weird bum behind the Winkies.

RG: For me, on the second and third viewing of the film, it got funnier and funnier. My concept—and again this is from my sick brain—is that it opens with the shot of the sheets and pillow, and then we come back to it later. To me the whole beginning of it is a nightmare/dream, and then she wakes up, and she's very unhappy, and in the end she goes crazy and kills herself.

CM: That's how we've pieced it together.

RG: That's pretty much it. If that approach is true, though, you realize on a second or third viewing how funny and arch someone like Ann Miller is. I was at the Cannes premiere, and when I saw Ann Miller I thought, "Oh my god! This is too over the top. It doesn't play. It's not real." But then you go back, and you see her in the final sequence where she's mean and a realistic Hollywood matron, and you start to see some humorous things that he's buried in the dream sequence that are pretty extraordinary.

CM: Tad Friend wrote in his 1999 *New Yorker* article that your scenes were part of the closed ending ABC wanted for a pos-

sible European release. When Lynch returned to shoot more for the film did he bring you in?

RG: No.

CM: Any idea who the Blue Lady in the balcony is?

RG: That's a good one. No, he doesn't [tell you]. I will tell you a little secret, though. When I told David how wonderful the responses I've been getting have been and that people say they want to see it again, he said, "Tell them people are going three, four, and five times, and they still can't figure it out!" He was gleeful about that. He delights in some of the mystery he creates.

CM: When Betty finds the blue box in her purse, it seems so large it is almost as if something that happened in the club made the box appear there. Is that how you see it?

RG: Yeah. I must say that do not understand that [in the same way] I don't understand the Blue Lady. A lot of the work I do is dream-related as well. [The box] sort of fits with "dream stuff." If the blue key represents the hit on Camilla, then yes, something in Club Silencio triggers this. You can take it literally: The magician says, "Hey, it's an illusion." [So] you're love affair is an illusion. This woman singing "Crying" is an illusion. She's not really

singing, she's pretending to sing. And the Blue Box is the dawning awareness that the love affair is over and not real. There is that kind of literal translation.

CM: You mentioned it earlier, but your line that it's "all recorded" does seem to be a key moment in the film. The whole *Club Silencio* sequence could be a metaphor for the film—or for all films—in that viewers aren't literally seeing people, they are seeing light projected; there is music but there is no band. If this is a metaphor, what do you think the "band" and the "music" represent?

RG: I've actually thought about this. I'm more of an admirer of David after having worked with him. A year ago we had a sculptor named Terry Todd down to do a wax sculpture of Jack as *Eraserhead*. He wanted to see *Eraserhead* again, and we basically just kept playing it for four days while he did this thing. I saw it more times than I'd ever want to see it. But I started to realize what David's use of sound has been throughout his career. There are sounds in *Eraserhead* that seem cliché now because we've seen them in every science fiction and horror and suspense movie [since then]. And then working on *Mulholland Drive* and analyzing it and liking it—finding it, in some ways, his most accessible movie—I realized that there are very few artists who are using the film medium in new ways. And doing it in any way consistently to express their particular vision. There are innovative young artists who are manipulating the medium in cool ways. Following and *Memento* are good examples of that, but I don't know that Christopher Nolan is expressing his own personal vision in any unique way. But David is. The notion that film is an illusion is the breaking of the fourth wall for the audience. I think a couple of reviews have suggested that the Magician is David's voice coming through. Whether David intended that to be, I don't know. But [that sequence] certainly marks the transition, and the transition is saying it's an illusion—this is a movie. Whether Naomi's character is inventing this and saying it to herself, or whether it is a process of David saying it to us, the audience, or whether it is a larger metaphor for filmmaking in general, I don't know. But it is certainly true that he, of all people, speaks in a direct and honest voice.

CM: One of the reviews I read described that scene with Rebekah Del Rio as one of the most powerful moments of music that Lynch has ever had in a film. In most Lynch films you get at least one brilliant moment of the melding of music and images.

RG: When we shot my scene, Rebekah Del Rio was there as well. We shot most of my wide shots first, and then we brought her in. Listening to that recording [of "Llorando"] in this big theater was as-

tounding. I mean, it is an astounding vocal rendition. I came back to my studio afterwards and thought, "I can't believe what I just heard. This woman is amazing. That was an amazing recording." I figured they recorded it with a track, and then they pulled the track and decided to use the a cappella version. So when I was at the Cannes Film Festival, John Neff and I were talking, and I said, "What a great performance. Did you record that?" And he laughed and told me that an agent had brought Rebekah Del Rio in to meet David while they were in the studio. David says, "I understand you sing. Why don't you sing something?" So she goes in and sings "Llorando," a cappella. What you're hearing in the film is that recording.

CM: Your voice is distinct and impressive in the same way Al Strobel's voice is in *Twin Peaks*. I'll ask you the same question we asked him: Do you do any kind of voice-over work?

RG: I've financed two feature films on my voice in the last few years. Years ago I was doing guest-starring and small roles in TV and film, just making a living as an actor. But I really wanted to get back into writing and directing. People had been telling me for years that I had a great voice, and I realized that if I could transition from straight guest stars on TV to voice-overs, I could make the same or more money and spend less time [on set] so that I'd have more time to write and direct. It took me about four years to make the complete transition. I still do one or two movie roles a year. I'll probably do more after *Mulholland Drive*—I've gotten a taste for it again. But I have quite a successful voice-over career. You name it, I've done it—Harley Davidson, Coke, Sprite—a thousand products. Right now, I'm the voice of Lincoln cars, and I do promos for Cinemax and HBO's creature features. I try to limit it to TV commercials because they require the least amount of time, and they pay the most, which allows me to do other things.

CM: Tell me more about *I Don't Know Jack*. I know that Chris Leavens was the director. What was your role?

RG: I was so careful to stay hands-off in some ways. I've been developing a company called Biography Films for a number of years. It's a company that does professional personal biographies for people's

family members by using digital editing and shooting them well with a great script. Quite by accident, somebody from that original theater company in San Francisco—Gene Stillman—called here one day about two weeks after Chris Leavens came to work here as a temp. We all started talking—me, Donna, and "Frankie" Phipps Wilson, who was in *Eraserhead* but got

cut. Frankie turned to Chris and said, "He [Gene] was the second-best actor I ever worked with." Chris said, "Who was the first?" And Frankie said, "Jack Nance." Chris said, "*Eraserhead*!" Chris had studied the film and had been fascinated by it in college. The next morning over coffee, Chris said, "You know that would make an interesting

documentary?" This was about two years after Jack had died. Right after Jack's memorial service, everybody came back to my studio, and we had an outrageous party. The people who were in the Circus Theater Company and the subsequent Theater of Marbles are an extraordinary group. So when Chris had mentioned this to me I thought, "My God! We've got the cameras. We've got the editing system. If we just have a big party and get all the people to come back, we can do all the interviews about Jack and get incredible people telling incredible stories about an incredible actor!" So I jumped on the idea. I think Chris was taken a little aback that I liked it so much. Within a week I had talked to other friends of ours. The title was from a guy named John Acorn, who suggested *I Don't Know Jack*. It seemed like a very clever idea at the time. It still does, actually.

Donna, who is the other executive producer and was one of Jack's dearest friends, was concerned about exploiting Jack, or exploiting the tragedies of his life. David Lindeman, who was the director of the original theater company and a long-time friend of Jack, was concerned about it being a puff piece. And my concern was that it wouldn't be representative of the studio. I was worried about quality—as they were—but from a different point of view. We were the three original executive producers. The best way I can describe my personal relationship to Jack was that we were cousins in a big family. Not brothers—we spent a fair amount of time together, but not a whole lot of time alone, or in deep conversation—we were cousins.

So we all started talking about it, and we liked the idea. We knew we had to have Catherine's involvement. The notion of a kid coming here as a temp and then directing his first feature at twenty-three was a very interesting idea. I thought it would be a saleable point later. Plus, Chris Leavens



Above and facing page: *Green in 7 Year*
ZigZag

"Lynch told me, 'It's a real dark magician. It's real key to the movie.'"



is a really unusual character. He's very different from Jack, but he also has his own take on the world and his own attitude about the world. We also thought that if we have him direct it—someone who didn't know Jack—it would prevent both the exploitation and the puffery. We'd get an outside perspective. I was starting to direct *7 Year ZigZag*, so there was no chance for me to direct it. Plus, Chris had voiced the initial idea.

It took a long time to get it moving, partially because Chris was inundated by other work. So we put an outside producer on it. Then we put two more outside producers on it—people who were within our “family” but not originally involved with the project. Because of *ZigZag*, my film, I stayed as far away from it as I could. I kept pushing the idea of having the parties because I knew it would bring people they had never seen before. I kept Donna on it all the time, and I stayed focused on *ZigZag*.

We had a bunch of problems during the course of the shooting, including some with “Frankie” Phipps Wilson. She's in her sixties and probably one of the best Shakespearean actresses ever, and she views the world as a Shakespearean melodrama. She thought that Chris was derailing the project and not honoring Jack. At one point she flipped out so bad she stole all the master tapes. So for months all we had was a low-res copy on the Avid. And then, by luck, we got the cut from last year back, which was pretty close to being finished. We polished it from there.

So my involvement has been: I financed it; it happened in my studio; I got us through the hard times; and I [maintained] the integrity of the project. Artistic integrity is really important to me. You can make crap all day long without it, but if you want to rise to something higher, you need to have integrity. It became really important to me to protect the vision of Chris and the editor, Mike Wargo, who also edited my film.

Having said that, the approach that Chris originally took, didn't work. He was going to try to keep himself in it and provide his take on the world. It didn't work. But his sensibility is very much there in the final piece.

And now we've had this great news: Jack just won Best Actor Award, posthumously, at the Kansas City Film Festival. We started shooting this film two-and-a-

half years after he died! We're putting out a press release that says, “Jack Nance wins Best Actor Award from the grave.” He would have loved it. I talked to David, and he was just jazzed!

We set out to make a film that would honor our friend—with the unvarnished truth—and honor his work and his life. We did it good enough that he is now being honored by others. It's a good feeling.

CM: What are the plans to release the film?

RG: That's a good question. It's a really ugly independent film market right now, much worse than what I understood when we started to make these two movies. Jack winning this award, and the press release and the article in *Filmmaker Magazine*—not to mention the *Wrapped In Plastic* coverage—all will help. David has put his name on it as “David Lynch Presents” and given me an introduction to Universal Focus, which distributes *Mulholland Drive*, although this may be too small of a picture for them. Our intent has been to get a couple of film festivals under our belt and then start approaching a couple of distributors. We would love a theatrical release. We shot on video and have not taken it to film yet. I know it will look pretty good. If not [a theatrical release], we'll sell it to cable. We're in process of looking for affiliates and allies to help us make that happen.

So, at this point, there is no release date set. I'm pretty confident that, at minimum, both films will end up on the Independent Film Channel or Sundance. We hope for better than that, and it is very possible.

CM: Is your own film, *7 Year ZigZag*, completely finished?

RG: Yes. It's on 35 millimeter. It has a really hot soundtrack. It has original new swing songs and some of the weirdest animation. Check our Web sites for information on all of these projects. There should be trailers up for both projects. Look at www.clubzigzag.com or www.jacknance.com.

CM: Tell me what the Cannes experience was like.

RG: I was invited to a dinner before the screening of *Mulholland Drive* at Cannes. StudioCanal had a building a block away from the Palais. Everybody there was in tuxedos and there was an extraordinary buffet. Everybody was there—all the heads of StudioCanal, David and Mary [Sweeney] and Angelo Badalamenti, Dan Hedaya and Justin [Theroux] and Naomi Watts and Laura Elena Harring. It was just a wonderful dinner. Then we go out, and there are thirty Mercedes limos lined up. We're shuffled into the limos in some kind of odd order. We drive one block and up to the red carpet and then get out of the limos.

The photographers went bananas! I've

never seen so many flashbulbs and people straining at the ropes. We all congregated at the bottom and troop up the stairway. If you shot it [for film], you'd shoot in slow motion, because that's how it felt. Every step, there were thousands of flashbulbs going off. Then we go into the theater. The audience is already there, but they don't get up because we're coming in. But there is thunderous applause, and as we sit down they all stand up.

The movie starts, and I'm watching it like everybody else. We get to my part in the movie, and it seemed like it lasted four seconds. It was the first time I had seen it, and I was enthralled. I knew that this was one of the best things I had ever done and one of the most fun experiences I had ever had. It was a time in my life where I felt like I was part of the director, and the director was part of my performance—we were so locked. But then seeing David's visualization of it, from the outside, presented a whole different world. It didn't look different, it didn't seem like a different place. I just realized how beautiful—how majestic—the place was, how he captured what we did that day.

When the screening was over we all stood up to leave, and Mary leaned over to me and said, “No hay banda!” I knew then that something was working!

I was so surprised when I met Angelo Badalamenti, who I thought was this thirty-year-old Austrian junkie. I didn't know he was this sixty-year-old, regular person from New

York. He had been talking to Donna, and she started crying, and he said, “I loved it when Donna cried in the movie.” I said, “You've seen the movie [I Don't Know Jack]!?” And he said, “Oh, yeah.” I grabbed Donna and brought her over to meet David, and he said, “Donna, your pain and suffering and how much you loved Jack was so beautiful.” That was a beautiful thing.

CM: What did you think when *Mulholland Drive* had been abandoned by ABC? Were you worried that it might disappear, or were you confident that it would come back in some form?

RG: That's an interesting question. You have to remember that I wouldn't have been in it had it been picked up by ABC. I would have been in the European version like [Twin Peaks]. I kept tabs on it somewhat, but I was directing my own feature and producing Jack at the time. We were in contact with David about the *Jack* movie, and that was a slow process, because none of us wanted to presume upon him. Catherine was making the calls at first, and then I worked with David, so I brought the director and everybody down to meet



David. He agreed to do an interview, but it took us six months to get him nailed down. Then we wanted some old photographs, but they [his office] said, "Yeah, we've got a couple, but David doesn't have time." It was slow process.

I was very disappointed when it didn't get picked up, even though I wouldn't have been in the pilot. I was just disappointed when I heard about the mess he had been put through. Then I heard that it was starting up, and that maybe they were going to do it. And, of course, my first

thought was, "Hey, maybe they are going to call me up to do some new shooting." But they didn't, which was fine with me because I loved what they used.

I found out about it because I received a letter from David in which we had to sign off to allow him to change it from a television pilot to a feature film because of the SAG [Screen Actors Guild] rules. Then I got letter from SAG saying David Lynch had no right to do this, and I fired back a really nasty letter to SAG: "This is one of the pre-eminent film artists working, and

you're saying that we don't have a right to say to him, 'Use our stuff? Get out of here!'"

But I didn't know if I had made it into the cut of the film or not. We heard from David's office, "Oh yeah, he's got a really memorable part." And we started to get inklings that this part was a stand-out. Now, I've got a healthy ego, or I couldn't do what I do, but at the same time I'm modest and used to the rejection of this business. So I assume nothing. It took many people telling me how memorable this part was before I started thinking, "Maybe this could

I Don't Know Jack

Interviews with David Lynch, Dennis Hopper, Catherine Coulson, Charlotte Stewart, and others

Directed by Chris Leavens

Produced by Wendy De Rycke and Jeffrey Scott McConnell

Executive Producers Richard Green and Donna DuBain

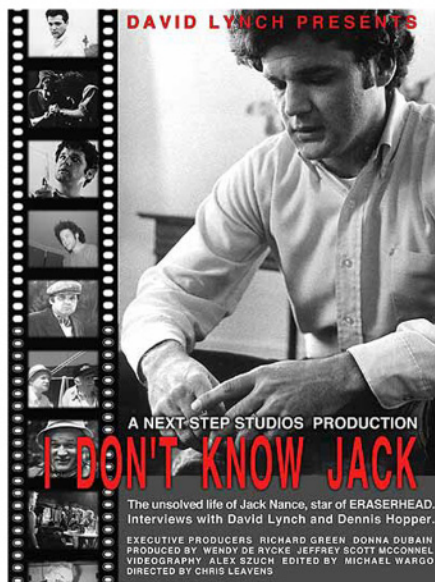
Photographed by Alex Szuch

Edited by Michael Wargo

Music by Brantley Kearns
2001; 91 minutes

Jack Nance is famous for two roles. His performance as Henry in 1977's *Eraserhead* is iconic—it's impossible to think of the film without Nance in the lead role. Indeed, it's impossible to think of the film without visualizing the movie poster—the head shot (including Henry's hair piled high) with the mist effect in the background. The film was a midnight matinee standard, but Nance's huge fame would come thirteen years later when Lynch and Mark Frost cast him as Pete Martell in *Twin Peaks*. Though his film credits during the eighties included *City Heat* (with Clint Eastwood and Burt Reynolds), *Barfly* (with Mickey Rourke and Faye Dunaway), and Lynch's own *Dune* and *Blue Velvet*, the *Peaks* phenomenon made Nance known throughout the world. And it is even Martell's dialogue in the first few minutes of the pilot that give this very magazine its name: "She's dead, wrapped in plastic."

Peaks re-energized Nance's career and his life—a life that had descended into alcoholism by the mid-eighties. But the early nineties brought money and a new wife, Kelly Van Dyke. Things seemed to be going well, but—like a David Lynch movie—there was trouble below the surface. Nance discovered that Kelly had begun using drugs and apparently had acted in some adult films. Despite his love for her, he decided their relationship should end. Distraught, Kelly committed suicide (aided, strangely, by a thunderstorm that shut down the phone lines from the location of Nance's current film project). Nance's life crumbled at that



point. Three years later, he was dead—and as with Kelly, the circumstances were strange, involving an early-morning scuffle at, of all places, a donut shop.

I Don't Know Jack, a documentary directed by Chris Leavens and executive produced by Richard Green and Donna Dubain, presents a portrait of the strange life and death of Jack Nance. And though we admired Nance's work, we wouldn't have described ourselves as "fans," so it is a testament to the quality of this film that very early on it had us riveted. By the end, it has the power of a compelling drama.

Leavens traces Nance's life and career with photos and clips (including very early, rare ones) and interviews with many, many friends and co-workers. Lynch is given extensive screen time, and there are also substantial segments with Catherine Coulson (Nance's first wife, part of the *Eraserhead* crew, and of course the Log Lady in *Twin Peaks*) and Charlotte Stewart (Nance's *Eraserhead* co-star, and Betty Briggs in *Peaks*). Dennis Hopper has a few clips of his association with Nance during the *Blue Velvet* days—there's a fantastic story of how Hopper flew to Los Angeles with Nance and "tricked" him into checking into a drug rehabilitation center (Hopper had stopped drinking by this time in his life) by telling Nance that the center

would cure his drinking problem by giving him pills that would remove the urges. In the meantime Nance would be "limited" to two or three drinks a day! (Nance was surprised to learn, after checking in, that he would not be allowed any drinks. "He lied to me!" he later told a friend, though the program worked. Nance came out clean, and Hopper probably saved Nance's life at the time by helping him.)

Directors, friends, family, agents, casting directors, and co-workers all have incredible stories about Nance the man and Nance the actor. Though Nance had an intriguing screen presence and threw himself wholeheartedly into every role, he didn't take the business as a whole all that seriously, and that probably limited his success. There were also a couple of near-misses, including losing out to Robert Blake for *In Cold Blood* and Dustin Hoffman for *The Graduate*. It's hard to imagine how differently things might have been if he had landed such major roles, though Charlotte Stewart suggests that he might not have been able to handle all the attention, and that he was destined to become a quality character actor, as are many others.

Another treat in the film is the inclusion of several audio clips of the Nance interview that John J. Pierce conducted with the actor that were published in *Wrapped in Plastic* 27. Even better, at least a couple are from out-takes (including a hilarious illustration of how difficult it was to tell when Nance had finished one of his stories—was he done, or just taking a lengthy dramatic pause?).

I Don't Know Jack is alternately funny, sad, and poignant. Unfortunately, it has not yet been released commercially on



Lynch talks about Jack Nance

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do something for me." Then Mary Sweeney sent me a French magazine, *Studio*, featuring pictures of *Mulholland Drive*, including one of me as the Magician. Then I knew I had made into the final cut.

CM: *The Magician scene is one of the more memorable scenes in the film.*

RG: Here's an interesting fact—David included my prep. That first moment of me standing there for a couple of seconds was shot before I knew we were rolling. I was doing my prep, getting ready to go, then I heard, "Action!" and then I moved. I was

surprised to see it, to be honest.

CM: *Do you have any upcoming projects?*

RG: We just pitched a movie to Disney. And I'm just finishing a screenplay called *The Pandora Project*. It's a little unusual for me because it's a big-budget, psychological thriller with an element of science fiction in it. It's about a brain operation that gives somebody telepathy, but this somebody is a really bad guy. So I'm trying to get that finished and sold.

We're spending a lot of time trying to get *Jack* and *ZigZag* distributed. Part of

that may result in me doing some touring as a musician again, as a singer.

I kind of like John Huston's career, where he got to write and direct some of what he wrote, and he did voice-overs, and he acted in his friends' movies. If out of *Mulholland Drive* I get the kind of roles I want as an actor—like a big, wonderful villain—maybe I'll just keep doing what I'm doing.

CM: *Thanks for talking with us.*



video. (It has been submitted to various film festivals.) To find out more about the film, go to www.jacknance.com. Perhaps if the producers get a large enough response, it will encourage them to begin production on a videotape or DVD release. Trust us, every Lynch fan will want this—it is an essential part of every library.

7 Year ZigZag

Starring Richard Green (Storyteller/Nick), Robin Banks (Dreamgirl), Leslie Macker (Kitchen girl/Hedy), Caroline Davis (Lily), and The Zig Zag Band

Written and Directed by Richard Green
Produced by Richard Green and Donna DuBain

Executive Producers Richard Green and Gloria Green

Directors of Photography Dermott Downs, Cynthia Pushak, and Alexander Szuch

Edited by Michael Wargo

Visual Effects by Chris Leavens and Christopher Miller

Music by Dinan and Green

Soundscape by Webolution #9
2001; 84 minutes

While Richard Green served as executive producer on *I Don't Know Jack*, *7 Year ZigZag* is his own film—a work he wrote, directed, and starred in. It tells the (apparently at least semi-autobiographical) tale of "Nick" (Green), an artist/hippie of the sixties who dreams of making a feature film titled *The Doomsayer*, in which a man tries to warn about the coming end of the world but is ignored. Probably overwrought and preachy (based on the sparse information presented in *ZigZag*), *Doomsayer* attracts little interest. Nick realizes that the only way to make this film is to make another film that's a big success, thus giving him some clout in the movie industry. It's the time of *Saturday Night Fever*, so he decides to incorporate music into his next project—not disco music, in which he has no interest, but thirties swing.

The film will be called *The Next Step* and be about a group of people trying to raise funds to open a swing club. Several times the film is close to production, but each time something happens, sometimes at the last minute. Nick decides that the



way to get the film rolling is to sell the music first, so he heads to Europe, where jazz is having a revival, and hopes to gather a following there, allowing him to make *The Next Step*, which, if successful, will then allow him to make *The Doomsayer*.

7 Year ZigZag becomes a story about the determination of an artist to overcome obstacles (and there are many more than those mentioned in our brief synopsis; in fact, the film's title is a clue) and follow his drive to create the art that speaks to his soul. This is, of course, not a unique theme (see, for instance, *Amadeus* and *The Whole Wide World* for a couple of excellent examples). What sets Green's film apart is the form, described in the movie poster as "a film in rhyme and swing." Green narrates the film in a rap-like rhyme. At first we thought that there was no way this could be maintained throughout a feature-length film without becoming tedious. And yet Green pulls it off, not only because of the quality of his voice (viewers of his performance in *Mulholland Drive* will need no convincing here), but because, on the whole, he makes the rhyme sound natural. Ex-

cept for an occasional forced line, there were long stretches where we didn't even notice the rhyme per se, because the rhythm, the beat, of the narration took center stage (along with, of course, the story that is being told through the narration). In retrospect, it's hard to imagine the film being done any other way.

As for the swing music, we'll admit to having next to no knowledge (or interest) in it before hand. It's all the more credit to Green, then, that we came away enjoying the soundtrack immensely. While not every song struck a chord with us, there were lots of songs that we thought were great. If Green was able to win us over to the sounds, we can only imagine how a swing fan would respond to the work.

We should also mention that the *Next Step* sequences that Nick is writing are presented in a fascinating black-and-white style that combines film and animation. It's hard to describe, but essentially the faces are photographed (and altered),

and the clothes are animated (rotoscoped, or the like). Something like that. You have to see it to understand how well it all works together.

7 Year ZigZag is a treat from beginning to end. We approached it with some trepidation (for us, "a film in rhyme and swing" served more as a warning than an enticement) and came away eager to see it again. Green has shown himself to be not only an accomplished musician, but also an exceptional filmmaker. As with *I Don't Know Jack*, *7 Year ZigZag* is not yet commercially available, but log onto the Web site (www.clubzigzag.com) to learn more about this amazing work. If you're a swing fan, you'll definitely want to see this film. If you're not, you'll enjoy the film for its cinematic inventiveness—and by the end you'll be a swing fan, too.



An example of the cool animation in *7 Year ZigZag*

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