

# CRAZY CREDITS

If you left before the end credits started to roll on any of Pixar's fabulously successful films (*THE INCREDIBLES*, *BUGS LIFE*, *FINDING NEMO*, *MONSTERS, INC.*, and *TOY STORY 2*), you missed some of the most fun!

Clever, comical "out-takes" are interspersed amongst the credits and considering that these are all CGI (Computer-Generated Imagery), these behind-the-scenes (or "behind the screams" for *Monsters, Inc.*) special inventions are too good to miss.\*

In 1939 MGM released two of the best-loved films ever made, *THE WIZARD OF OZ* (set mostly in an enchanted realm) and *GONE WITH THE WIND* (a historical drama). *GONE WITH THE WIND* won 10 Academy Awards and reigned for decades as the most successful film ever made. *THE WIZARD OF OZ* won only two, but that was due largely to its misfortune of being released in the same year as *GONE WITH THE WIND*. Over the past 60 years, however, *WIZARD* is touted to have been seen by more people than any other film ever made. That's because in 1956, it was introduced to new generations on television,\*\* and has been a yearly Thanksgiving and Christmas event ever since.

In 2004 two films of similar genre were released: *THE INCREDIBLES*, an animated film where CGI fully replaces live actors and sets, and *RAY*, a historical drama on the life of the musical genius, Ray Charles, covering 1930 to 1966. Each won two Academy Awards: *RAY* for Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role and Achievement in Sound Mixing and *THE INCREDIBLES* for Best Animated Feature and Achievement in Sound Editing.



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The 1939 epic imported "munchkins" - many of whom couldn't sing, act or speak english - from many countries. Their salary was \$50 per six-day work week.

inaccurate designations, but no one has come up with a contemporary nomenclature for these jobs in this rapidly changing techno business.

The cast of *RAY* comes in at 63. Approximately 250 crew members are then named for their creative and technical contributions. Twenty-one people are mentioned in the Makeup category alone, with 14 recognized in the visual effects category.

\* Don't look for them during the credit roll of your DVD copy though, because they're incorporated now in the Bonus Features sections, which have become crucial to marketing the films for DVD sales.

\*\* Coincidentally, 1956 was also the year that the first Videotape Recorder was introduced on the market, leading to the further phenomenal success of *THE WIZARD OF OZ* in later years on videotape and DVD. That is, once everything became affordable ... the 1956 Ampex video recorder was priced at \$50,000.

**WHY SO MANY CREDITS?  
IS EVERYBODY SOMEBODY?**

Who are all these people? And where were they all back in 1939 on two of the most successful films ever made? The answer is that they were there, too. All busy at work. They just never got their names in the credits.

In 1939 most of the cast and crew on a motion picture worked for pay only. The studio moguls ruled Hollywood then, and technicians worked under studio contract, just as the actors did. They did their jobs (and their magic) on as many films as they were ordered to do. They worked eight hour shifts on weekdays and a half day on Saturday. At the end of each week, they collected their pay checks and went home to their families with no one being the wiser for how they made a living.



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**TITANIC** holds the current box office record but, all dollars being equal, **GONE WITH THE WIND** is tops—with more people buying tickets for the classic than any other film.

In those days, there were big stars and bigger studios. The big five (MGM, WARNER BROS., PARAMOUNT, 20th CENTURY FOX, & RKO) made the films, distributed them, and ran the theater chains. The average film took 22 days to shoot and cost \$300,000. Contract actors worked in several movies a year. Hymphrey Bogart appeared in seven films for Warner Brothers in 1939.

**GONE WITH THE WIND** and **THE WIZARD OF OZ** were shot entirely at the studio in Culver City, California. Rhett, Scarlett, Dorothy, and Toto arrived at the MGM lot each day and were transported to Tara and Oz through the skillful work of all the creative people on the set. But, when it came to giving credit, only the department heads actually got their names on the screen: Art Director, Set Decoration, Special Effects, and Costumes.\*

**FRANKLY, SCARLETT, I DO GIVE A DAMN!**

Today, however, getting your name in the credits is very important to people in the film business. The big studios no longer “own” contract players or technicians. That means that most people involved in filmmaking don’t know from one film to the next when they will work again. Having their names in the

\*Thanks to the Internet, if you want to know how many people really worked on **GONE WITH THE WIND** and what they did, you can go to the INTERNET MOVIE DATA BASE (IMBD) and see that more than 300 people, including stunt doubles and Clark Gable’s tailor, contributed their skills to the success of that film. The same is true of **THE WIZARD OF OZ**. IMBD cites a long list of uncredited professionals who worked on that film. Maybe nobody cared as long as they got paid.

The ultimate “credit” in the movie industry is the Academy Award. Here’s how they looked in 1939 ... and now.

**THE ACADEMY AWARDS**  
Then and Now

1939	NOW
Best Picture	Best Picture
Best Actor	Best Actor
Best Actress	Best Actress
Best Supporting Actor	Best Actor in a Supporting Role
Best Supporting Actress	Best Actress in a Supporting Role
Best Director	Best Director
Writing	Original Screenplay
(Original Story)	
(Screenplay)	Adapted Screenplay
Cinematography	Cinematography
(Black & White)	
(Color)	
Art/Set Direction	Art Direction
Editing	Film Editing
Music Scoring	
(Best Score)	Best Score
(Best Original Score)	
Music – Best Song	Best Song
Sound	Sound Mixing
	Sound Editing
Short Film	
(Cartoons)	Short Film (Animated)
(One-Reel)	
(Two-Reel)	
Special Effects	Visual Effects
	Animated Feature Film
	Costume Design
	Documentary Feature
	Documentary Short Subject
	Foreign Language Film
	Makeup
	Short Film (Live Action)

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credits is a way of getting the quality of their work known to other people in the industry. It's their résumé ... their portfolio. Talent agents as well as unions and guilds insist upon film credit for their clients, and they negotiate the size and placement of their names as well. In some of the unions and guilds, continued membership (and the all-important health insurance benefits) depends on how often or how recently names have appeared in film credits.

Just about everybody gets mentioned in the credits on present-day films. Every creative and technical specialty and sub-specialty, along with the truck drivers, caterers, personal trainers, and accountants see their names on the screen. For the large majority of moviegoers before the mid-90s, these professions were only a black and white scroll on the screen. With the dawn of the amazing DVD medium, however, we can now see these filmmakers at work and hear from their own lips how their creations were born and developed. In the RAY two-disc set from Universal Studios Home Entertainment, we are given the opportunity in the Bonus Features to hear Director Taylor Hackford's commentary on the film in which he gives an enthralling account of what it took to bring Ray Charles' story to the screen. He reveals how the authentic 40s and 50s look of the film was achieved and heaps praise on set designers, decorators, the art department, and costume designers, to name only a few.

In Disney's DVD release of THE INCREDIBLES, the enthusiastic members of the creative team at Pixar Animation Studios discuss in fascinating detail the step-by-step process from storyboard to screen of this incredible achievement. We get to hear and to see how it was done by the Production Designer, the Art Director, the Composer, the Cinematographer, Storyboard Artists, and by Brad Bird, the Writer/Director, who shows us drawings of characters he made 10 years ago when he first started to think about making this movie. At no other time in history have movie lovers had the opportunity to experience the filmmaking process as we do now through the digital generosity of the DVD. Nor have we ever had a better opportunity to get to know the people in the credits. And, if we're hungry for even more information, we can also go to Pixar's Web page, where they also give a liberal amount of information on their collaborative creative process. Just click on How We Do It.

Obviously, as the technical level of sophistication has increased in filmmaking, so has the length of the credit roll. There are so many new specialties that to define them all would make tedious reading, especially when the bonus features on DVD's bring them so vividly alive.

Surprisingly, some things have remained very much the same as they were 60 years ago. In today's credits the names of those considered most important to the movie are listed in the Main Titles, before the film begins. The Produced By credit comes just before Directed By, which always precedes the opening of the film. In 1939 producers Mervyn LeRoy (WIZARD OF OZ) and David O. Selznick (GONE WITH THE WIND) were the

guiding lights behind their movies. They chose the stars, hired and fired the writers and directors, and they stayed with the film all through its production and final editing. And there was only one producer.

THE INCREDIBLES has four producers, and RAY has 10. These are the people who found the material, developed it, raised the money to make it, and oversaw the financial and technical aspects of the production. Taylor Hackford (Director and one of RAY's Producers) struggled for 15 years to bring the story of Ray Charles' early life to the screen. (He says now that he is glad he didn't get it done before because he wouldn't have had the amazing Jamie Foxx to play the lead.)

Both of these 2004 films had Production Managers, as did one in 1939 who got credit on GONE WITH THE WIND. But no one was recognized in this capacity on WIZARD. Yet we know there had to have been one because

he's as indispensable today as he was then. He's the head honcho who decides what the shooting schedule will be, budgets the film accordingly, and hires the crew. He makes sure that everyone does what he's supposed to do ... on schedule. He also makes sure all fees are approved and coordinated. He's assisted in the budget breakdown by the Auditor or Controller who then keeps track of all the financial transactions on the film. Others who work with him are named variously Assistant Production Manager, Production Office Coordinator, Production Coordinator, Assistant Production Coordinator, and assisting these assistants are Production Assistants and Production Secretaries.

Strangely enough, we sometimes still don't see the names of people in the credits who are extremely important to the film.

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Walt Disney Pictures' and Pixar Animation Studios' THE INCREDIBLES hold 2004's 4th highest box office total.



**Holly Hunter who did voice-overs for "Elastigirl" is pictured with THE INCREDIBLES Writer/Director Brad Bird.**

Agents (some of whom wield as much power today as the "moguls" of yesterday) often originate the film projects and put a Producer together with a Director, Writer and stars, but their names don't appear in the credits. Nor does the name of the studio head who gave the project the green light in the first place. He (or she) is the one who had the guts to commit millions of dollars to the film! And who can often lose his (or her) job if it turns out to be a turkey!

Today, because audiences demand more realism and because it is also cheaper to shoot some movies outside of the studio, most are shot on location, and a great deal of time and money is spent in moving people from one place to another. Had *GONE WITH THE WIND* been shot today, it might mostly have been done on location, possibly in Romania, where *COLD MOUNTAIN* (another Civil War drama) was shot recently because the countryside looks much more like North Carolina in the 1800s than today's North Carolina does.

*RAY* was shot in and around New Orleans. A small town nearby was the setting for the Seattle scenes in the '40s because the set designer saw that with a little set dressing it could closely resemble that city at that time. Stock footage was used for many of the establishing shots, saving up to the millions of dollars it would have taken to recreate them. A Location Manager chose these sites and got the necessary Louisiana permits to keep a harmonious relationship going with local people and police. Once the site has been chosen, the Transportation Coordinator figures out how to move all the necessary people, equipment, and props to it. He'll hire a Transportation Captain and Drivers. The Transportation Coordinator is also the one who acquires the "picture cars" (all vehicles which will be shot in the film) and the "honey wagons" (trailers with rooms and bathrooms for the cast). The big stars today have their own private motor homes for their exclusive use during shooting. It's the transportation crew's job to see to it that all vehicles are kept in working order.

Whether at the studio or on location, the sets are built by the Construction Coordinator and his Swing Gang (Foreman, Head or Lead Carpenter, Hammers—the ones who actually put

nails in wood!—Runners, and the Purchaser), and it is painted by the Lead, Stand-By and Sign Painters. It is then "dressed" with props chosen by the Set Designer and Decorator, purchased by the Buyer, transported and supervised by the Leadman (formerly called the "gang boss"), and then put in position by the Set Dresser and Stand-By Dressers. The Property Master takes care of the "props," which are anything that is carried or handled by the actors. The Head Greens Coordinator, Stand-By Greensman, and Greensman handle the trees and other plants, real or artificial, in the film.

Even when shooting on location, oftentimes directors choose to use stock footage in the final picture whenever possible rather than go to the expense of creating a set. In *RAY*, thousands of dollars were saved by the use of stock footage in establishing shots of Seattle in the '40s and downtown Los Angeles in the '50s.

With the sets completed, the Camera Crew begins its work. These are the craftsmen with the colorful names, like "grip," "gaffer," and "best boy." They are responsible to the Cinematographer or Director of Photography (known as the DP) and are charged with all the apparatus connected with the camera. The DP is not allowed to touch the camera because of union rules in the US. The actual shooting is done by the Camera Operator.

The Key Grip does whatever is necessary to help the camera move, so he's in charge of scaffolding, the crane or technology called "Cablecam" (which makes the camera "fly"), and the dolly (consisting of wheels and a track, which lets it move smoothly along the ground). He's assisted by the Best Boy (no one seems to know where this term came from) and the Dolly Grip.

The Gaffer is the head lighting technician who sets up all the lighting to achieve the effects the Director and DP want in a scene. No one is sure where this term came from but it (like GRIP) probably came from older theatrical days when they worked in the beams above the stage called "gaffs."

The Focus Puller keeps the lens and shutter properly adjusted, and the Loader makes sure the camera is always loaded with film. Depending upon the size of the production, of course, all of these



**Universal Pictures' *RAY* captured the life and career of the legendary pianist Ray Charles. Jamie Foxx won the Academy Award for his leading role and is pictured here with Director Taylor Hackford.**

people may have assistants. The assistants may even have assistants.

Of course, many of these jobs and some of the terminology will change with the increased use of digital video, but after the lights and camera are in place, there's only one person who can call "Action!" That's the Director. He or she is the leader of this large collaborative effort. Before coming onto the set, he or she worked with the Producer, the Screenwriter, the Casting Director, the Actors, the Production Designer and Sound Mixer to bring about the first day of shooting. His closest associates during the filming are the DP, his First Assistant Director (called First AD), who is responsible for keeping everything on schedule and on track, and the Script Supervisor, who acts as the Director's eyes and ears. She/he keeps a record of everything that goes on in a shot and makes sure that in the next shot, the continuity is flawless. A drink half full in the right hand of an actor must appear in exactly the same hand and fullness in the next shot. The script supervisor sees to it.

The "ears" of a film are embodied in the Sound Mixer, who is the equivalent of the DP. His role is little celebrated but is crucial to authenticity. He hires the Boom Man, who has the job of placing all the microphones on the set, along with the Cablers who work with the boom man and do a little of everything.

Films often have Second Units. Under the Second Unit Director, this smaller group of technicians film location, or establishing shots, and action or mob scenes with large numbers of



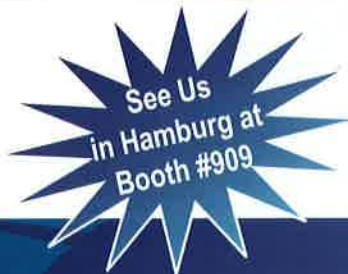
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Many location shots for RAY were made in Louisiana. This shoot and set in Laurel Valley, Louisiana depicted Ray Charles' boyhood home (actually Georgia).

extras. A Second Unit saves time and money in shots where none of the stars are needed. GONE WITH THE WIND had a Second Unit, but it was never given credit on the film.

Since much of the sound in motion pictures today is created artificially (with dubbed-in sound effects, music, and re-created ambient noise), there's another group of technical experts who accomplish this. Their job comes after the film is shot. Sophisticated

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**Phyllis Bagdadi is a Senior Vice President at NBC Universal. She is a studio veteran of 23 years, with 17 years in the IFE industry. She's never lost her love of movies and the magic of movie-making, and during her years at Universal Studios she's had the opportunity to see a lot of them made. She's been a WAEA Board member, has served on the Media Committee for the National Endowment for the Arts, and been a part of numerous Hollywood associations involved in the film industry.**



audiences don't tolerate fakery anymore. In the 30s, people watching movies who heard birds in the background and knew they weren't the right birds mostly went along with it. But today, audiences expect authenticity in sound as well as picture.

The Supervising Sound Editor is responsible for the quality of all the sound on the final sound track (except for the music). She or he oversees the work of the sound effects editors. ADR (automatic dialogue replacement) Editors dib or "loop" any voices that need to be recorded again, along with crowd noises. The Foley editor or recordist synchronizes the body movement sounds with the picture. He or she works with a team of actors called "walkers" on a Foley Stage. They recreate any sounds of bodies moving that weren't picked up correctly when the film was shot. The Foley Stage consists of slabs of concrete for sidewalks, gravel pits for the sound of walking on country roads, and other

surfaces used to recreate sounds in different environments. The Rerecording Mixer combines the production dialogue, music, and sound effect tracks into one composite track for a "sweetening" (additional new sounds) that might be considered necessary for the final sound track.

Postproduction also includes some of the most creative aspects of filmmaking. That is the work of the Film Editor, the Negative Cutter, the Color Timer and the creation of the music by its Composer, the Music Editor, and the Scoring Mixer, to name a few.

Filmmaking is the most collaborative art in existence. New technologies create the opportunity to expand the imagination and embellish the art far beyond the dreams of filmmakers 60 years ago. Numerous people deserve to be given credit on the screen today. They work

behind the scenes, and if it weren't for the end credits, no one would ever know who they are.



**David O. Selznick's masterpiece starred Vivian Leigh and Clark Gable, a cast of 50 speaking roles, and 2,400 extras. The 3 1/2 hour epic (originally rough-cut at 6 hours) had a whopping six-million dollar budget. This still shot from the set features Leigh, Gable, Director Victor Fleming, and cinematographer Earnest Haller.**

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