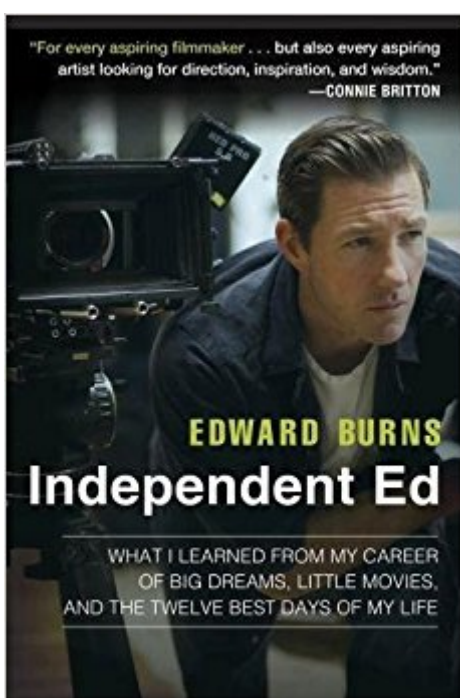


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# Independent Ed: What I Learned From My Career Of Big Dreams, Little Movies, And The Twelve Best Days Of My Life



## Synopsis

Acclaimed independent filmmaker Ed Burns shares the story of his remarkable career and offers a candid, instructive account of the ins-and-outs of making great movies without the backing of Hollywood. As the second of three children from a working-class Long Island family, Ed Burns thought a career in filmmaking was a pipe dream. When his first film, *The Brothers McMullen*, won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival, he proved himself to be one of the most distinctive and tenacious filmmakers of our time. Since then he has gone on to star in major Hollywood films while remaining dedicated to his true passion: making small films that he believes in. Sharing the lengths he's gone to in order to write, direct, cast, produce, shoot, and edit films on a shoestring budget, Burns uses stories from his life and career to illustrate what it takes to make it as an indie filmmaker. His extreme focus and drive prove that passion and hard work can pay off, and he urges students and aspiring filmmakers to embrace and learn from their failures and continue to pursue their goals. A gripping, inspirational story about forging your own path, *Independent Ed* is a must-read for casual movie fans, serious film students, and any creative person searching for a bit of inspiration.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Every young, hungry, creative person should view this as a textbook.... It's a how-to."

—Matt Lauer, *Today*  
—Independent Ed  
—“Independent Ed” is Burns' inspirational speech to filmmakers wondering how to begin, or how to keep going.

Mr. Burns' charm stems largely from his ability to play the nice, real guy — the sort of guy who, despite landing roles in Hollywood films like "Saving Private Ryan," gets excited when Al Pacino says hi to him in a restaurant. The Wall Street Journal, Weekend Journal "Independent Ed" doubles as a handbook for aspiring filmmakers who need to stay afloat in an ever-mutating business. Metro New York " [Ed Burns] prides himself on his ability to pitch, making it feel like I was telling a story while sitting at the bar with a beer in my hand. Fortunately, that's also the easy tone of his memoir, which focuses on his hardscrabble moviemaking career after his initial brush with success 20 years ago. " Entertainment Weekly " His book is an attempt to dispel some of the myth surrounding filmmaking, and to explain it's like any other craft. A unique voice, thick skin, and a deep love of the work are required and while he makes clear they don't by themselves ensure success, he's used them to find his own fulfillment and to help keep the self-doubt that confronts any artist at bay. " The Week " "Chronicling the struggles and the long hours as well as the heady moments when months of planning and writing come to fruition, Independent Ed is a must-read for movie fans, film students, and everyone who loves a gripping tale about what it takes to forge your own path in work and life. " Red Carpet Crash

Ed Burns was born in Woodside, Queens, and raised on Long Island. While in college in New York City, Burns switched his focus from English to filmmaking before quickly moving on to make The Brothers McMullen, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. He has acted in 31 films and written, produced, and/or directed 13 others. He lives in New York City with his wife and two children.

This was a surprisingly candid account that details Edward Burns entire career as a filmmaker. Although he doesn't mention this even once, what it also is, is a great story about entrepreneurship. I'm an entrepreneur (and I've written one screenplay, collecting dust on a shelf). We think of filmmakers as filmmakers and entrepreneurs as entrepreneurs. Burns is both. He's got a product line - films. Films have a life cycle, like all products, and he proceeds to create a product, learn, take a few steps forward and repeat over the course of twenty years until he's really honed his game. Even more so than that Burns is his own investment portfolio. Outside of his other projects he's made 10-11 films to date. Two or three were big hits, five or six (in his own words) were failures and

the remainder were solid singles or doubles that sounded like good experiences, if neither a commercial success nor major failure. Based on the book Burns considers himself a filmmaker over an actor and, although he didn't expressly say it, I believe he probably considers himself a screenwriter above all else. I would have liked to know more about that specific aspect of the process since screenwriting is the part that interests me the most. Perhaps an idea for a follow-up book. Burns also (inadvertently) reminded me just how incredibly difficult it is to sell a script, get a movie made and ... the part that was most eye-opening to me ... get it distributed correctly for commercial success. It is a long, uphill battle that can likely never be won as a side-hobby. Burns has certainly earned his stripes with a career-long devotion not only to writing but to learning, understanding, leveraging and reacting to changes in his industry. Congrats.

Ed Burns is a multi-talented guy--he's a writer, producer, director, filmmaker and actor. Burns worked at a production assistant for Entertainment Tonight for four years before making his first film, *The Brothers McMullen*. He made the film for \$25,000 in 12 days, and it changed his life. The film won the top award at the Sundance Film Festival, even though it was rejected by hundreds of other film festivals, including the Long Island Film Festival (Burns is from Long Island and the film was shot in Long Island). Despite the success, Burns went for eight years without equaling the success of his first movie. He became adept at making small films, with many of his friends serving as actors, on small budgets. Burns said, "You can always make a movie, but the real problem is how do you get people to see it once it's made." Much of the book details how Burns fought to get his films seen. Burns has been an innovator in using different technologies to release a film. He has become a master at making "microbudget" movies. He said, "For the first time in the history of the cinema, filmmaking does not need to be a capitalist enterprise." Burns, who almost gave up his filmmaking career several times, has sound advice for others: "There are no bad movies. Making movies is a gift, a joy." "We do this because we have no choice; it is who we are." "You must love what you do and do it with everything you have." "Independent Ed" is educational and inspirational, regardless of your aspirations. You do not have to be a budding filmmaker to enjoy this book.

Slim, quick, to the point, a wonderful set of lessons can be derived from Burns' tales of life in the movie trenches. I really enjoyed this and so should fans of his movies, but, particularly, those trying to make their first/micro-budget movies would gain a lot from it. It was written for them more than his audience. This book was not about his personal life, it is about what it takes to succeed doing what you love. Highly recommended if you traffic in The Arts!

Not shocking Burns knows how to tell a good story, but this isn't some navel gazing memoir. This is a story about perseverance. Some of the best parts deal with failure and the lessons learned. The book doesn't have a self help vibe. Instead, it reads like you're sitting across from Burns hearing the stories over a beer.

Just finished it on my kindle and really enjoyed the story of his life's work so far. I had no idea he had to work as hard as he has or how close he came to not getting some of his films made. A must read for anyone wanting to get into the business. I'd also love to read a book from his dad's point of view while all this was going on and while he was a cop. Sounds like a great dad.

It was a great, enjoyable and informative read. Burns is a natural story teller. I've been following his career since Brothers McMullen and like his honesty, his take on relationships, and his "out of the box" thinking. If he didn't take bold chances, his life path would be so very different. I'm a native New Yorker myself and like the fact that he uses the city as his backdrop for all his stories. And unlike Woody, he's easy on the eyes.

Ed grew up on my street in Valley Stream. As a young film maker I am really inspired by his story and likeness to my own. I met him a few weeks ago while shooting a music video and he recommended I check out his new book. To say I was educated and inspired is an understatement. I've always been a fan of DIY and this is the bible on it. I shot a tribute to The Brothers McMullen if you catch it as I shot this entire music video throughout Valley Stream on my iPhone. It's safe to say I took his advice to heart. Thank you for writing this.<http://youtu.be/Hi42aL7uq0E>

Since Brothers McMullen, I have been following Ed Burns, watching every movie as it comes out. I am a huge Woody Allen fan and Burns seemed to have a similar yet more modern style. Saw this book and bought it immediately! I am almost done with it and it's been pure enjoyment to read. I love taking pictures and video (on a very amateur level:) and found this book inspiring on so many levels! Get it!!

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