

Inheritance, Italian Style Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the
Writer/Director

How did you get involved in filmmaking?

I came at it from the perspective of a writer. I have published several nonfiction books and have been writing poetry and fiction my entire life. I told a friend who had written screenplays about a story, and he said it would make a great film. I started writing screenplays and didn't stop.

Was the story based on a real life?

Sort of. I wrote the screenplay in about a week in Santa Lucia del Mela, an old mountain town in Sicily, while my wife and her sisters were... you guessed it... at the family home in the valley below arguing over furniture. So the central concept for the film came out of that.

Does that mean the characters are based on your family members?

Not really. The characters started out as conglomerations of people from real life, but then I changed them to make them more interesting.

So what part of the story is true?

My wife did come from a large Sicilian family with a history of being wealthy nobility. The chandeliers and furniture came from those old family homes. Also, most of the sisters emigrated and developed successful professional careers. And the family does still have a villa in Sicily.

Where did you film the movie?

We filmed at our house, "The Boxwood," in the historic Druid Hills neighborhood of Atlanta, Georgia. The three sisters in the wine bar scene was filmed at Sotto Sotto and the Arie and Seconda restaurant scene at Baoronda, both restaurants in Atlanta that are owned by native Italians. We also filmed at Frogtown Vineyards and another neighboring vineyard in Dahlonega, Georgia, Atlanta Active Wear in the Virginia-Highlands neighborhood of Atlanta, and the Atlanta Regional Airport in Peachtree City, Georgia. The Giardini Naxos apartment scenes were shot at the home of Italian emigrant friends in Tucker, Georgia. Everyone was really helpful.

How did you get the money for the film?

We ran a couple of kickstarter (crowd funding) campaigns, one before and one after principle production. We raised money from family and friends and financed a lot of it out of our own pockets.

Where did you get the title for the movie?

The original title was *Catania!* (ka-TAN-ee-uh), based on the name of the second largest city in Sicily, on the east coast. Catania is a combination of crumbling chaos and confusion with exceptional beauty, so for me it became a theme in the movie. However, after our initial screenings we realized that no one in the U.S. had ever heard of Catania, and they had trouble remembering the name, so we changed it to the current title, which also tells you something about what the movie is about.

How does inheritance work in Italy?

The courts are about 20 years behind in Italy, so everyone avoids lawyers and the judicial system like the plague, especially in Sicily. It is common for families to divide up property while the parents are still alive. Arguing over family property is fairly common, I think, although most people don't want to talk about it.

How do you think the characters would react if their parents really did die at some point in the future?

I have no idea, but I wouldn't want to be there to find out. That's basically what Margaret Mitchell said when someone asked if she was planning on writing a sequel to *Gone with the Wind*, the second best-selling book of all time, so I am in good company.

What's the next project?

I've written about ten screenplays, and once we start to get some money back from this film, I have one I'd like to move forward. It's about a psychiatrist, surprise, surprise.

Inheritance, Italian Style is a 99 minute feature length comedy. For more information: doug@laughingcowproductions.com; cataniathemovie.com ; or sales@houseoffilm.com +001 (678) 283-5562; Laughing Cow Productions, 794 Springdale Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.

