

TG board (omitting students):

I have to resign the presidency and position on the board of the OU Theatre Guild immediately due to health reasons. When I was in Thailand teaching in January, I noticed that I had very low energy - I could barely teach my class and meet with a few research students, and be taken to lunch by a few of my past students. I pretty much slept the rest of the time. This is not a new thing as I have experience energy deterioration for some time. It just became apparent when I had well defined duties I have been doing for over 20 years and can compare my activities to prior years. I have been fighting diabetes for 15 years and it is getting worse. It is a degenerative, progressive disease and leads to long term organ damage. I believe there were a few years before starting treatment that some substantial damage occurred before I was driven to start meds by severe symptoms. I am not on the verge of dying, but need to really concentrate on addressing it and think I can recover substantially if I focus on exercise, diet, etc. and more importantly some severely stressful things in my life are going to get better which I think has been a large contributing factor to my deterioration as described below.

My passion project for the past two years is my film (Pax Masculina). We did principle photography and wrapped last August. Everything seemed fine. I had about a dozen school of drama students or alumni as cast or crew - their first professional film acting or crew opportunity in most cases. About two weeks after wrap, I got an eight terrabyte hard drive with all the takes or dailies on it and started watching them on my computer. To my horror, I saw that my Director did not film according to script - he didn't follow the screenplay. not little changes like when an actor has trouble saying a line but basic plot changes, introduction of long monologues which were written on the fly, and arbitrary deletion of sections he didn't like. This was a script which had been under development for a year+ and had gone through hundreds of drafts. He and I were coauthors of the screenplay, but the "story" was mine. He was basically a script doctor helping me with dialogue and plot holes. When I saw this, I kicked him out of the editing process in an attempt to "salvage the film" and make it what it was meant to be as much as possible. My Director and a senior actor tried to hijack the film to make it into what they wanted, both ordering my editor to stop talking to me and only to the Director. I paid for 100 % of the film and they had no investment in it and it fact were well compensated for their advisement and other contributions. My editor refused as he said that John writes the checks and the producer always has ultimate say (he went to UCO where they seem to teach film protocol). It has been a stressful fall as they tried to change the film into a character study (staring the actor involved so good for his career) using a large fraction of my life savings. In my attempt to salvage the film, I need reshoots of scenes, which have been sabotaged by these two. I decided to cut the senior actor's scenes from the movie just because they slowed the pace down to a crawl and it is an action movie. Even though he was ordered not to, the Director told the actor about the cut and both set out to destroy me.

With this background, I came back from Thailand only to start hearing some unbelievable rumors about myself. The SOD and MT students are a social lot and some had been convinced to start untrue rumors about me and then word spread and it became an unstoppable movement with a number unfriending me from Facebook. I know the central source of the rumors and it is someone who I rescued from abject financial straights - so much for gratitude but she started sleeping with the Director so that was more important. Anyway, some students and recent grads complained to OU I believe with the encouragement of these two (with no evidence) and my instinct is to go to war to defend myself as I know I did not do anything wrong. But, I feel so bad physically that I just don't have the energy to fight it. And who wants to go to a party one isn't welcome at? So, I am absenting my self from all OU Fine Arts activities, including attending any performances, all volunteer activities, etc. I am focusing what energy I have on finishing my film and participating in a non-leadership role in other's films - I know how to help someone else fulfill their dreams without trying to steal them.

I have been threatened with physical violence by an allie of the actor in question. If I suddenly die or sign documents that give control of the film to any of these, know that I have been murdered or signed under duress. If legal chicanery is used to gain control of my film, same. The way to tell if there is a single second of this actor's scenes in the film or on his reel or the directors reel or on the diva's (involved in reshoot) reel, this is not my film. I don't expect any action, just awareness.

I am disappointed that the OU adminstration did not even give me a chance to tell them what I see happening, but that says alot about how much the efforts and funding I have provided is appreciated. I consider each of you on the board my friends and hate to leave you in this lurch, but have no choice.

Don't worry about me, I am in a good place. I am actually relieved in that I can focus my limited energy now on things I love and on health. Ever wonder why no home-grown Oklahoma film has gone anywhere (Hollywood films made in Oklahoma like Twister don't count)? Despite excellent cast and crew and film rebate incentives second to none in the nation. I hope to be part of the growth of Oklahoma film and to provide professional film opportunities for OU students and alum despite the fact that I cannot interact with them directly any more.

I will send Mary Margaret, Tom, and Paul details with names.

If any of you have questions, I will help in may way I can in the transition.