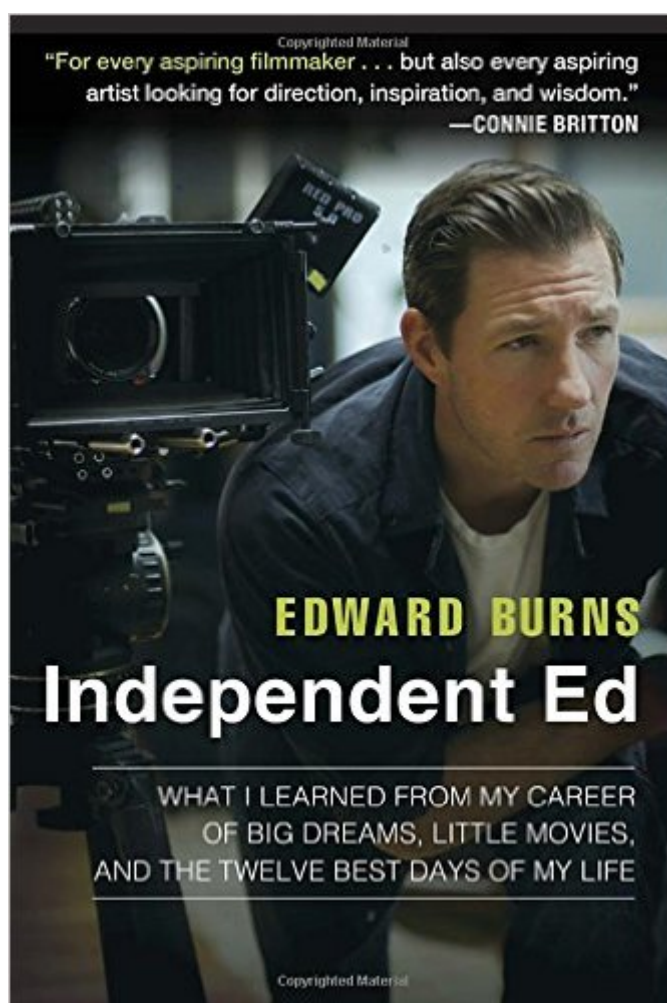


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# Independent Ed: What I Learned From My Career Of Big Dreams, Little Movies, And The Twelve Best Days Of My Life



## 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

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Avery (November 10, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1592409334

ISBN-13: 978-1592409334

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.7 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (65 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #117,104 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Individual Directors](#) #55 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Movie Directors](#) #116 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Theater > Acting & Auditioning](#)

## Customer Reviews

In this conversational memoir/how-to, Ed Burns reveals the hows and whys that enabled him to launch and maintain his own career in the movie business. This is no Cinderella story, but rather an honest account, a frank telling of his strengths and weaknesses in the kind of tone that regular guys

use when discussing regular matters. There is a gravitas to Burns' bluntness in that he doesn't sugar coat his failings or glorify his successes. It is a very workmanlike account of his career, befitting a guy who hasn't lost track of his roots despite some home runs in Hollywood. And there's more. He opens up about how he makes his movies for micro-budgets. He focuses on what's most important: The Story, the characters, the message. While others dream of the 100 million dollar budget, Burns is thrilled to just be behind (or in front) of the camera making a movie. It is a passion for him, a theme that he never surrenders. And a good thing to because so much of the movie business is glitz and glamour, so little about making a quality film. Even if not every one of Burns' movies is a smash hit, he is a sincere storyteller. Reading this book is like listening to him tell it to you. It is a great story about a guy who knows what he wants, doesn't always get it, but enjoys the journey. I would also highly recommend this book to any film students or anyone aspiring to become a filmmaker. I was there at NYU film school many years ago. I genuinely wish there was a book this honest and blunt to read because it's more than just a "tell it like it is" thing. This book is about a philosophy, about doing what you love and loving what you do, regardless of the paycheck. You either are or you are not. Ed Burns is what he wants to be, a filmmaker. This book takes you into his world. Enjoy it, especially if you want to make films or understand the process. If ever there was a filmmaker whose work I've seen and read that I wanted to work with, it is Ed Burns.

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.

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.

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