



KIMBERLY PEIRCE, *Director*

To Make It Big in Hollywood, You Start With a Good Story

FROM EARLY ON, I wrote stories and put them into booklets for my friends. I started animating as a little kid, always trying to make a character. A very prescient professor said to me, "You know, you really want to be a filmmaker."

One of the reasons you don't have a lot of women directors is that it's pretty hard for them to get experience. You have to get access to a good story, actors and money to put it all together. It's not like other art fields where you can afford to do it independently.

I came of age in the '90s in the New York indie-film world. Right out of school, I read a story in a newspaper that turned into the movie "Boys Don't Cry." The main character, Brandon Teena, was a woman who lived life as a man in order to be with women. She fell in with a group of people who both accepted Brandon and then at a certain point didn't accept Brandon. From the day that I read the story, it was as if I had no choice.

"Stop-Loss" is another movie I made that was very personal. New York was in mourning, and America declared war. I knew immediately that I wanted to make a movie about the soldiers. Long after that, my own baby brother enlisted and ended up fighting in Iraq. I was instant-messaging him on my phone all the time—which is an amazing thing we can do now. He and other soldiers brought back videos set to rock music. I knew the movie needed to be born from those images. We got inside this emblematic story of young Americans who, after 9/11, wanted to defend their country and their families.

Every day is like a new day in Hollywood. People can tell you have some talent, you're going to do well—you're confident. If your movie falls apart, you're not confident. You get funding, you're confident. You

People have to allow fear into the process. It's part of creativity, whatever your job.

realize it's only half the funding, you're not so confident. People have to allow fear into the process. Fear is part of creativity, whatever your job is. It's part of believing in something and wanting it to happen. So I let it in and I say to myself, "OK, you're scared." And then when something works out, I say, "Wow! You were scared!"

The director of a movie is the powerful one. I have found that there's a certain way of surrendering that power and sharing it in the pursuit of a common goal that really works. I can share the credit, which I do a lot. There's a big bounty, the real joy of collaboration. And women may just have a natural instinct for that.

N See photos of women leaders at xtra.Newsweek.com

PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA TODD HARPER FOR NEWSWEEK

OCTOBER 13, 2008 | NEWSWEEK 71

W10815 kimberly.peirce
NEW BREAK FOR PULLQUOTE!

thurs. 1pm - new pullquote style
friday 12- adjusted quote

Folio	Mag	Pg	Vol	MO
071	D	CS	0	0