

50 MPH: EPISODE 6

“A WORKHORSE TAKES THE REINS”

Transcript (00:31:25)



KRIS TAPLEY

This is *50 MPH*!

[INTRO MUSIC]

DENNIS HOPPER (as “Howard Payne”)

Pop quiz, hot shot!

DENNIS HOPPER (as “Howard Payne”)

There’s a bomb on a bus.

JEFF DANIELS (as “Harry Temple”)

You’re deeply nuts, you know that?

DENNIS HOPPER (as “Howard Payne”)

Once the bus goes fifty miles an hour, the bomb is armed.

SANDRA BULLOCK (as “Annie”)

Stay on or get off?

DENNIS HOPPER (as “Howard Payne”)

If it drops below fifty...

SANDRA BULLOCK (as “Annie”)

Stay on or get off?!

DENNIS HOPPER (as “Howard Payne”)

...it blows up.

ALAN RUCK (as “Stephens”)

Oh, darn.

DENNIS HOPPER (as “Howard Payne”)

What do you do?

KEANU REEVES (as “Jack Traven”)

You have a hair trigger aimed at your head. What do you do?

DENNIS HOPPER (as “Howard Payne”)

What do you do?!

KEANU REEVES (as “Jack Traven”)

What do you do?

KRIS TAPLEY

I’m your host, Kris Tapley, and you’re listening to an oral history of director Jan de Bont’s 1994 summer blockbuster, *Speed*, straight from the people who made it happen. Now, don’t forget to fasten your seatbelts. Let’s hit the road!

KRIS TAPLEY

Hello again and welcome back to another episode of *50 MPH*. When we last left off, things are moving along at Fox. Screenwriter Graham Yost, producer Mark Gordon and junior executive Jorge Saralegui are developing the script for *Speed*, tightening it, making it better. Meanwhile, they’re thinking about casting. Who could step into these roles and not break the bank? More to the point, who would be willing to do it in the first place? It’s a struggle to find the right equation to get a green light from the studio. Here’s Jorge Saralegui with an update.

JORGE SARALEGUI

OK, so, we’re going along, can’t cast the movie. And if you’re wondering, “Where’s Keanu Reeves?” For the first couple of months that we’re trying to figure out casting, he’s too young. In other words, we won’t even talk about him. He’s just plain off the list. He’s not a “pro” and “con” guy. He’s just, “No.” He’s a kid. So, we’re doing that and we are unable to get a lot of people. At one point we decide, “OK, what if we cast Sandy’s role big, like Halle Berry, and then we can get somebody lesser for Keanu’s role?” And she turned it down. Which is funny because a few years later, her manager, who I’m talking to about something completely different, says, “Yeah, you know, Halle Berry still beats herself up over having turned down *Speed*.” So, there we are having a hard time casting. We are, in the meantime, looking at directors. We’re making a \$15 million action movie. All we want is a serviceable action director. We talked to various people.

KRIS TAPLEY

Alright, let’s hit the brakes a moment. If it sounds messy that’s because it was. They were sort of doing all things at once, trying to line up actors, trying to get a director to sign on. But we’re going to spend today talking about the director search. Now, when you read about *Speed*, you probably read all kinds of things about who was, quote, “in the running” to direct this movie. You’ll read about John McTiernan. You’ll read about Walter Hill. Here’s the thing. Nothing you read is true in the sense of the studio having much of a choice. It’s fair to say every director in town was, quote, “in the running,” because, not that they sent it to everyone, but they would have taken anyone. Here’s Mark Gordon detailing the level of desperation.

MARK GORDON

We met a couple of directors. Let me tell you, I couldn't give this thing away. No director who you would put at the top of any of your lists was interested in doing this movie at all. You know, it was slim pickings. I did meet with Michael Bay, before he was Michael Bay, and decided not to go with him. It was less a rejection of Michael. And more – and by the way, I can't even remember whether he was that excited about doing it. Sometimes you have meetings with people, and you meet them and it's kind of a general meeting, but there's a specific project to talk about. So, the meeting was specifically about *Speed*, but it was also a general meeting.

JORGE SARALEGUI

At the very beginning, Peter Chernin sent me on a suicide mission to talk to Renny Harlin. OK, Renny Harlin had just done *Cliffhanger*. He was doing post at Fox and everybody knew it was going to be a big hit because of that trailer that had already come out, right? So, Peter Chernin sends me to meet Renny Harlin – keep in mind that I'm just a junior executive – and says, "Here's your argument. OK, your argument is he's already succeeded on a big budget. Now he can show everybody he can succeed at a low budget." Because, of course, that's how action directors think! So, I go there. I don't even know if I even bothered to say that, right? But I went and he was actually really kind. He obviously had no intention of doing it, but he spent like an hour talking to me and that didn't go anywhere. He's the only big name we approached, to just hit a home run immediately, right? And get Renny Harlin coming off of *Cliffhanger*.

KRIS TAPLEY

And Renny Harlin, by the way, was already in the Fox stable as it were, having directed the sequel to *Die Hard* in 1990. Although it's probably a pretty good thing he didn't have that debacle of *Cutthroat Island* hanging over his head just yet. That would come later, in 1995. Anyway, here is former Fox production president Tom Jacobson with more on what their expectations were of getting one of these bigger names.

TOM JACOBSON

I don't remember discussing – and it could be a memory, you know? I mean, Walter, obviously, had been involved in the Alien franchise. But I don't remember him being discussed for this or raising his hand for it. We weren't going to get, in those days, John McTiernan or whoever was the sort of top action directors, you know? John was already, like, you know, *The Hunt for Red October* and the *Die Hard* movies, and so he was unattainable. So, we were trying to hire a solid – again, a type of action director that would take this assignment.

MARK GORDON

I met with this other director, and we met him with the studio, and his idea was to shoot it all with blue screen, or rear-screen projection.

KRIS TAPLEY

So, this has been mentioned before, specifically in the commentary track for the film that Mark did with screenwriter Graham Yost. But I don't think the name has ever been revealed. I was able to track down who this was, and the director Mark is referring to here is Dwight Little. Dwight Little was a reliable, sturdy, journeyman filmmaker who was coming off of collaborations with Steven Seagal in *Marked for Death* and Brandon Lee in *Rapid Fire*, both of which he had done for Fox, which is why he was seen as a good hand at the studio. He had also directed the fourth installment of the *Halloween* franchise, *The Return of Michael Myers*, in 1988, as well as *The Phantom of the Opera* starring Freddy Kruger himself, Robert Englund, in 1989. Now, as far as I can tell, if there was anyone else in the world truly, quote, "in the running" to direct *Speed*, it was Dwight Little. There were others in the ether, but he was sort of at the forefront of that crop of filmmakers for Fox.

TOM JACOBSON

We liked Dwight. He was a solid action director.

JORGE SARALEGUI

And he was the one we were going to go with. And that was the example of, like, "OK, we can go for a safe thing, or we can roll the dice for a home run with Jan's spiel."

KRIS TAPLEY

"Jan's spiel." Alright, let's finally get to that. Jan de Bont, at this point, was an in-demand cinematographer, and we're going to get far deeper into his portfolio and impact on the industry in a special episode next week. But just to quickly skip a stone across things right now, Jan began his career in Europe, specifically the Netherlands, shooting films for a young Paul Verhoeven like *Turkish Delight*, *Katie Tippel* and *The 4th Man*. He made the journey from Holland to Hollywood and established himself as a badass right out of the gate. On the embattled production of Noel Marshall's *Roar*, which was finally released in 1981 after a decade of folly, Jan was partially scalped by a lion on the set. And yet, 200 stitches later, he returned to finish the film. He went on to projects like the Stephen King adaptation *Cujo* and the Danny DeVito comedy *Ruthless People*. He worked with rising stars like Tom Cruise on *All the Right Moves* and Madonna on *Who's That Girl?* More to the point, in the 80s and early-90s, he established an aesthetic that became something of a Hollywood signature on films like John McTiernan's *Die Hard* and *The Hunt for Red October*, Ridley Scott's *Black Rain*, Joel Schumacher's *Flatliners* and Richard Donner's *Lethal Weapon 3*. And he had also just delivered some of his greatest work ever with Verhoeven's runaway box office smash *Basic Instinct*. However, he had never directed a film, though he had long set his sights on doing so. And now, at last, let's hear from Jan de Bont, and where he was coming from as someone looking to finally direct professionally.

JAN DE BONT

Yeah, you have to kind of go back a little bit in my early days when I went to the film academy. That was in Amsterdam. It was an academy that just had started. So, basically, we knew as much as the teachers, and the teachers had to learn, as well,

how to run a film academy. But actually, that made it so great, you know? Because it was a level playing field between teacher and student. We kind of – we originated, in those years there, a film group called Film Group 123, meaning anybody could join. It was relatively experimental. But in those days, I also directed already. I did, of course, photography as well and editing and that's how we thought, at the film academy, that the only way to teach film students, is to learn everything, not just learn one facet of it. Not just sound recording or photography or acting or producing. So, we changed - for every project, we changed parts. You became the sound recorders, you became the producer, you had to act in it.

KRIS TAPLEY

So, it was already in his blood, is the point, and it was nothing he felt was a giant leap. So, 20 years into a heralded cinematography career, he was finally eyeing the director's chair. And Jan was familiar with the *Speed* script, by the way. He first came across it while it was in development at Paramount, in fact. As I mentioned briefly in an earlier episode, he was there developing the skydiving action movie *Drop Zone* at the time, which would later be directed by John Badham with Wesley Snipes.

JAN DE BONT

They told me, at Paramount, about this script they had, *Speed*. And I read it and was like, "Ah, this is exactly," you know – and the script wasn't really quite ready yet, but it was in really good shape to really go to a studio with. But Paramount didn't want to do it, and then it went to Fox and they read it first and they liked it. But they weren't quite sure, because the biggest worry was, like, how the hell can a movie about a bus be interesting, you know?

KRIS TAPLEY

Alright, so, how does the project end up back in Jan's orbit at Fox? I'm just going to let these four guys – Tom, Mark, Jorge and Jan – talk through what happened from here.

TOM JACOBSON

So, Jan – we all knew Jan from – he was a celebrated cameraman. He had done *Die Hard* for us and something else but he was just really well-regarded as a cameraman. And also, in terms of his contribution to the look, the feel, of the movie, right? Jan wasn't just a shooter. He was a guy who had a feel. But we didn't know him as a director, or even know he had aspirations as a director. And I got a call from David Gersh, his agent, who represented top – mostly below-the-line people. The Gersh agency represents a bunch of people, but David specialized in below-the-line people and cameramen. And he said, "Listen, I really want you to consider Jan for this project, *Speed*. I'd like you to meet with him." So, I was very honest with David, like I was with most people, and I said, "Listen, because it's you and I know who Jan is." I knew him a little bit. I had known him from, like, a couple of years before in sort of the independent scene. "I'll meet with Jan. But it's very unlikely. If we don't need to experiment with a first-time director – you know, business is conservative – we won't. But, you know, as a favor to you, David – we do a lot of business together, and Jan's stature as a DP – I'll

meet with him. But, you know, low expectations.” And David said, “I appreciate it. My job is to get him the meeting.”

MARK GORDON

When Jan came in for the first meeting, he was awful! And the studio said, “We’re not hiring him.” He just couldn’t articulate what he wanted to do. He’s not the greatest communicator anyway, but he was nervous and he really wanted to do the movie, and after the meeting I got a call saying, “There’s no way we’re hiring this guy.” And I said, “Give him another chance. He’ll be better next time. Let’s remember, we’re not hiring an actor. We’re hiring a director. And just because he’s not good in the room doesn’t mean that he’s not the right director for the movie.” I knew that he had great ideas and I just asked the studio, I just said, “Listen, he was really nervous and he’s not used to doing these kinds of meetings. He’s a DP. He’s a filmmaker. He’s not an auditioner. He’s not an actor. He’s not slick. Don’t fucking judge him. Let’s have another meeting.”

KRIS TAPLEY

Just to jump in here, no one on the studio side remembers this, by the way. They just remember Jan coming in with swagger and selling them on his vision. But Jan actually does recall a first meeting, where he says he didn’t do a good job of convincing the suits that he could accomplish the movie’s action scenes on a budget.

JAN DE BONT

Yeah, I’m trying to remember who that was with. I thought with some of the studio executives and production executives, which are the people that go over the budget. So, that’s what they complained about, and I was afraid that I didn’t really address those production entities and the cost and things like that, and how you could basically make those scenes happen.

MARK GORDON

So, Jan and I prepared for the meeting again – the second meeting. They agreed to take another meeting. And I kind of walked him through how to sell yourself as a director to a studio, and he was much better the second time.

TOM JACOBSON

So, Jan comes into the meeting incredibly prepared. And in the meeting, “Here’s the vibe of this movie. Here’s what it should feel like. Here’s what it should look like. And you’ve got one problem with the script.” And we went, “Oh yeah?” I mean, he’s a cameraman. He said, “You know, the movie goes like this and it goes like this, and you’re missing, like, an end-of-the-second-act crescendo. You’re missing, like, some fantastic moment where, just, everything - the odds are against everybody.” Jorge and I are going, “Yeah?” And he pitched, in the room, the unfinished freeway bus jump. It wasn’t in the script. That came from that director’s meeting. And we went, “Oh my God.”

[SPEED CLIP]

CARLOS CARRASCO (as “Ortiz”)

Jesus.

SANDRA BULLOCK (as “Annie”)

Jack. Jack. What if I shift into neutral and just keep the engine revving?

KEANU REEVES (as “Jack Traven”)

No, he would have thought of that.

ANNIE

Then what, then? What? What?

NATSUKO OHAMA (as “Mrs. Kamino”)

Oh my God!

SANDRA BULLOCK (as “Annie”)

What? Jack!

KEANU REEVES (as “Jack Traven”)

Floor it.

SANDRA BULLOCK (as “Annie”)

What?

KEANU REEVES (as “Jack Traven”)

Floor it. It’s an interchange. There might be an incline. Floor it.

SANDRA BULLOCK (as “Annie”)

Fine.

KEANU REEVES (as “Jack Traven”)

Everybody hold onto your seats or whatever you can. When we hit the gap, heads down.

DAVID KRIEGEL (as “Terry”)

That’s it? That’s it??

KEANU REEVES (as “Jack Traven”)

That’s all we can do.

JORGE SARALEGUI

He sold himself on, “This movie is good, I’m going to make it bigger.” Which, if you think about it for a moment, OK, it’s a \$15 million movie and you’re a DP looking to get his first job on a \$15 million action movie, like, you know, in a kind of “whatever” movie. You don’t sell yourself by making it bigger because you’re going to scare people. Of course, he meant, “I’ll get more out of the dollar,” OK? He meant that. But no, when you heard

him talk about what he wanted to do, again, we were either kidding ourselves or whatever, but nobody was thinking, “Hey, he’s going to blow the budget out.” But the way that he imagined it, OK, you saw that every scene was bigger than what it looked like. Bigger/better. Bigger-slash-better. More dynamic. The word would have been “bigger,” but you could say “dynamic” almost equally. And so, that’s what he sold. He sold himself as, in effect, “I’m going to elevate this movie,” is another way to put it, even though that’s not the word he used. And if you think about it, it’s odd, and impressive. He was very confident. He was not reassuring us, you know what I mean? He very easily could have been doing, like, a defensive action, like, “I know what I’m doing. I can do everything really cheaply. I can get it in on time because I’ve done it a million times before. I can crank this thing out and you know I’ll do a good job and I’ll come in on budget.” He could have done that, and it’s not what he did. And, you know, at the end of the day, to Peter Chernin’s credit, that is why he got the job.

JAN DE BONT

You know, it wasn’t a small production, but it was still a low budget. But the good thing is that, having worked with so many film crews then, I got a lot of help from – a lot of people helped me by asking less money, number one. And they also saw it could be really exciting. Something so different than all those over-organized productions.

JORGE SARALEGUI

Of course, I was ecstatic about the idea of going with a guy who saw the movie as being even better, OK, than what we had had in mind.

MARK GORDON

So, you’ve got these guys who, like, “This is silly” or, “I’ve already done this” or, “I’m not doing this movie.” These guys, who are either hanging around the middle or are on the way down. And then you’ve got guys like Jan and Michael Bay who really hadn’t had their shot yet. And I wanted to find somebody who I thought could be the Walter Hills and the John McTiernans and the Dick Donners, but just hadn’t had the opportunity. There are two reasons I thought he was the guy for the movie. One is that nobody else wanted to do it! Now, that’s half of it. The other half of it is that, though not always, there are some incredible cameramen who have gone on to become very successful directors. Not a lot. Generally, editors are – historically have become successful directors more than cameramen. The work that Jan had done as a cameraman was magnificent in this genre, and you could see how clever the camerawork was. And because I found that the camerawork was consistent and interesting in multiple films, I presumed that it wasn’t just the director, that he had a lot to do with it and he was a real collaborator with the directors that he worked with. And then I did my homework and found that he was, in actuality, a big part of the visual success of the movies that he made. Also, I knew that the movie was going to be, logistically, very, very complicated. And Jan had experience working on difficult, complicated visual effects pictures. I wanted to take a chance on somebody who could be great, and it turned out that he was. He really, really directed the hell out of that movie and made it what it is.

JAN DE BONT

I think I was totally ready for it. I mean I had worked on some really big action movies already. And really, I knew how to handle that part of it. I just didn't want such a big crew. My problem was more, like, I wanted a small crew, because if you have this gigantic crew, that really becomes so stagnant in the making process, because we were always moving, moving. You cannot move that base camp with you each time to the next spot you go. So, the key thing was to keep it as small as we possibly could. And the whole movie takes place in two hours, mostly, so, no costume changes, no this, no that. So, you could get away with a lot less people, and that was really helpful.

KRIS TAPLEY

Beyond all of that, however, Jan had a real vision that was sort of an extension of those early days in Europe with Verhoeven and his film school pals. These were budding filmmakers coming up in the wake of the French New Wave movement, who were excited by the prospect of capturing a certain level of reality on screen. Emotional reality, circumstantial reality, the gripping nature of the day-to-day. Now, apply that to the realm of genre and you start to see the promise of a new kind of popular filmed entertainment, one that, of course, owes a debt to the American filmmakers who had begun forging this path a generation before Jan.

JAN DE BONT

I always liked action movies. My favorite action director was John Frankenheimer. I don't know if you saw the movie *The Train*, but that's just one example. If you look at *The Train*, where [Burt] Lancaster has to run over the train, jump from wagon to wagon, climb down, jump from the train – all in one shot – so he did something that I love to do, which is actors doing their own stunts. He very rarely used doubles. And that, to me - the moments you can get by seeing this actor do that completely enriches that scene in such a tremendous way that no stunt double could ever compete with that. He's not only performing, but he's also really running for his life, and he really has to be so careful and everything works at the same time. As an actor who would normally do the close-ups for that and the stunt double has done all the running part, he has no way that an actor can duplicate that energy that you have and that incredible amount of excitement that you feel and almost ecstasy that you were succeeding in jumping from wagon to wagon to wagon, that you actually make it. You cannot act that. Because most acting is reacting to things and I want them to do it, so that response comes from inside their own mind, and not because the director tells him or her how they should feel. That doesn't work to me. Anyway, so, those kind of simple-made, but more direct action movies.

KRIS TAPLEY

And so, yeah, without getting too far ahead of ourselves, Jan wanted to apply this to *Speed*. He wanted to immerse his actors in hair-raising, real-life circumstances so that he could capture a pure emotional reality on screen. And it was exactly what the movie needed.

TOM JACOBSON

I use this as an example. I teach at USC. I teach one class at USC. I use this as an example of “you never know anything,” and how to interview directors. This story. So, my point of view about that meeting and about a lot of meetings with creative people, like directors, is you don’t know what you’re listening for until you hear it. So, that’s how Jan got the movie. Like, “OK, fine, I’ll take the meeting,” from that to, like, “Oh, wow. You’re the guy.”

KRIS TAPLEY

By the way, as we start to wind down here, I did want to mention that Jan had one other big idea that he pitched in the room that day that didn’t quite make it in front of the cameras.

TOM JACOBSON

We got really close to production to doing this, and he had another pitch. He wanted to give the annoying old lady on the bus a dog, an annoying dog that everybody hated. And she always rode the bus with this dog. And the dog was a character. And all the people on the bus rode this bus a lot. “Ugh, fucking dog.” And then right when they’re getting, like, at the end, when they’re getting off the bus, the dog jumps out of the lady’s arms and runs back into the bus. And it’s, like, down to the minute, like, when shit’s going to happen. And of course, the hero, Keanu’s character, jumps back on to save the dog. And it was also an amazing pitch. Because think about - that’s character, right? He’s pitching, like, a character or relationship. He’s pitching the hero to save the dog. We ended up not doing it because it’s like, could you imagine?

KRIS TAPLEY

And while we’re still here in development with the studio guys, we should probably put a button on that Sherry Lansing story and tell the Fox point of view. You’ll recall from a previous episode that after *Speed* was placed into turnaround at Paramount, it mistakenly turned up in Sherry Lansing’s stack of scripts to read when she came in to run the studio there in 1992. She really wanted to make the movie, but the execs there had to break the news that they no longer had it, and then there was a last-ditch effort to get the script back from Fox, where Mark Gordon had set it up already.

TOM JACOBSON

I can’t remember where in the process this happened, but Jan was on the movie and we were budgeting. We weren’t in pre-production yet. We were in sort of, like, packaging, let’s say. Like, in the right circumstances with the right people with the right budget and the right green light from everyone, we’re going to make it. But we weren’t green-lit. So, then I get a call out of the blue, from John Goldwyn, who I did not know, and I had a lot of respect for him for this call. And he says, “We don’t know each other, but I’m calling you about *Speed*.” I said, “Yeah?” And he said, “So” – and I don’t remember if these were his words, but he basically said, “I made a mistake.” Which, you know, people don’t do. It was a very, sort of, honorable thing to do. He didn’t know what was going on with us. He knew it was making its way through the pipeline. Sherry Lansing came in, read the script and didn’t know that it had gone into turnaround. It was on some pile.

Read the script, and said, “Hey, let’s make this.” And John had to tell her, which I don’t think was a fun conversation for him, “It’s a bunch of pictures that went into turnaround. No one was making it at the time.” And he called and he said to me, “You don’t know me. You don’t owe me anything. We’re competitors. Are you going to make the movie? Because if you’re not going to make it, could you give it back to us?” And he had also gone to the producer, Mark Gordon, and said that to him, and said, “Look, you’ve got a fee. If you’re not going to get paid to make it over there, I’ll green-light it right now. I’ll pay your fee. I’ll even give you a bonus on it. Because I want to make it. I’ll guarantee that we’ll make it.” So, I remember saying to John, and then saying to Mark, “Listen, I can’t guarantee to Mark or you that we’re going to make it. It’s in the pipeline. It’s got a really good chance of getting green-lit because of all these factors. We like it. We don’t have a lot of...” I just was honest. “So, we’re not going to give it back to you.” And Mark came to me, who is honorable but also aggressive, like I said, in the good way, and told me the whole story. “Are you going make it, Tom? You’re my friend. I can make more money over there. Is this really going to...” You know, producers get paid when a movie gets made. And, anyway, so, the rest is history. We said no to Paramount. We made it, and in those days, you know, there’s a lot of – and I don’t know if *Speed* is a famous story – but there’s a lot of pretty well-known stories of turnaround hits. Obviously *Home Alone* is one of them. *E.T.* is one of them. *Forrest Gump* is one of them. And those stories have a similarity in that - because no one knows anything, right? You can’t predict creative success. It’s like, well, it doesn’t seem – *Forrest Gump* especially so – “Well, that just seems weird. We don’t know what that is. We don’t want to make it.” *E.T.*, the famous story about *E.T.* is that I think it was at Columbia and Steven had made *Close Encounters* there. And it was, like, they had *Starman*, and they said, “Well, we don’t want two E.T. movies.” Anyway, so, that’s how – that’s what happened at Paramount and why it didn’t go back there.

KRIS TAPLEY

I did reach out to director Dwight Little for comment, by the way, given that there’s so much discussion of him here. He politely declined, but just to close the chapter, Fox ended up pairing him with Graham Yost to develop and direct his *Speed* follow-up. Unfortunately, it kind of happened again, as star international filmmaker John Woo decided he wanted to direct that project in the end. That movie was *Broken Arrow*, with John Travolta and Christian Slater. And that is why Little has an executive producer credit on that film. He would go on to direct *Free Willy 2: The Adventure Home* and *Murder at 1600*. But circling back to *Speed*, we have a director! But who is this guy anyway?

[OUTRO MUSIC]

KRIS TAPLEY

Next week on 50 MPH...

KRIS TAPLEY

It’s time for a detour as we take a deep dive into the work of Jan de Bont.

BILGE EBIRI

That sense of unpredictability and vitality, he loves to foster.

KRIS TAPLEY

New York Magazine film critic Bilge Ebiri joins me to discuss the Dutchman's early days in Holland as a cinematographer for directors like Paul Verhoeven.

BILGE EBIRI

But it is part of Jan's journey, right? I mean, this journey from sort of the way he was doing things as a cinematographer and sort of what was innovative for him or what was special for him and how that eventually translated to him as a director.

KRIS TAPLEY

We'll talk about Jan's move to the States, where he would become a key collaborator of Hollywood's top-tier directors, but not before coming out of the gate with a near-tragedy on set.

BILGE EBIRI

There are a couple of ways to respond to an incident like that, right? You can become very careful and be very buttoned-up in the way you might shoot action. Jan de Bont goes in the other direction.

KRIS TAPLEY

And of course, we'll dig into his limited run as a director himself, from *Speed* to *Twister* and beyond.

BILGE EBIRI

He becomes one of these filmmakers who, like, doesn't mind danger on set.

KRIS TAPLEY

All of that and more next week right here on *50 MPH!*

KRIS TAPLEY

Thanks so much for listening. *50 MPH* is written, produced and edited by yours truly, Kris Tapley. You can find us on Twitter @50MPHPod. I'm @kristapley. That's Kris with a K. You can also catch every episode and more at our website 50MPHpodcast.com. If you dug the show, please like and subscribe and do all the things. We'll see you next time.