

## **50 MPH: EPISODE 36**

### **“THE GLITZ! THE GLAMOUR! THE OSCARS!”**

Transcript (00:34:08)



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**KRIS TAPLEY**

This is *50 MPH*!

**[INTRO MUSIC]**

**DENNIS HOPPER (as “Howard Payne”)**

Pop quiz, hotshot!

**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**

The 96th annual Academy Awards are right around the corner. Next weekend! Movies like *Oppenheimer*, *Poor Things*, *Killers of the Flower Moon*, *Barbie* and *Maestro* are up for top awards, and listen, I know a thing or two about that. For 18 years, I covered the film industry as a journalist and I have spilled my fair share of copy about the annual awards season. I’ve seen the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences evolve in many ways, some exciting, some alarming, but any institution that is staring down a 100-year anniversary is bound to change along the way, isn’t it? I would like to point out, though, that one of *50 MPH*’s very own was recognized with one of the Academy’s Scientific & Technical Awards a few weeks back, and that is John Frazier, the special effects coordinator of *Speed*. We talked a lot back in the production episodes about the blind-drive concept used by stunt drivers like Gil Combs and Donna Evans in operating the bus, and the movable pod that John conceived so that this could be done from areas all around the bus, whether on the top, in the back interior or off to the side. Well, John shared in recognition of that along with two other folks. The official language states that the award was given, quote, “to Arnold Peterson and Elia P. Popov for their ongoing design and engineering, and to John Frazier for the initial concept of the Blind Driver Roof Pod. The roof pod improves the safety, speed and range of stunt driving, extending the options for camera placement while acquiring picture car footage with talent in the vehicle, leading to rapid adoption across the industry.” End quote. So, bully on John for that well-deserved recognition, and congratulations as well, by the way, to *Speed* costume designer Ellen Mirojnick for landing her first-ever Oscar nomination this year for Christopher Nolan’s *Oppenheimer*. We’ll be pulling for her next weekend. But today, as we do around here, we’re going to go back in time to the 67th annual Academy Awards. The ceremony took place on March 27, 1995, celebrating the best in 1994 cinema, and indeed, *Speed* was represented. The film picked up three Oscar nominations, which themselves were revealed on February 14, 1995, and a Happy Valentine’s Day it was for the movie’s film editor, John Wright, sound effects editor, Stephen Hunter Flick, and sound mixers, Gregg Landaker, Steve Maslow, Bob Beemer and David Macmillan. This, you will recall, was the year of *Forrest Gump* and *Pulp Fiction* at the Oscars, and *Speed* was one of four movies to walk away with multiple trophies that night, the others being *Forrest Gump*, of course, Tim Burton’s *Ed Wood*

and Disney's *The Lion King*. Pretty cool stat. And it had to be a heady experience for everyone involved in this little bomb-on-a-bus movie that had exploded expectations every step of the way. So, let's first hear from our director, Jan de Bont, about his experience at the 1995 Academy Awards.

### **JAN DE BONT**

I really liked it. I went with my wife and it's always a dream as a child to go to the Oscars and really, you know, participate and see all those big names walk by, and it's kind of fun to really see all those actors come in the red carpet, and then of course when you hear that your movie won two Oscars for sound, that is fantastic to hear that, of course. It was like, "Wow." Then you're really in seventh heaven, because it's like, that's what you always had hoped for when you were a child. I always told my mom I was going to go to Hollywood and I was going to go to the Oscars, and never quite sure if that ever would happen, but it did happen. So, it was really cool.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

Alright, let's get into it. Yes, *Speed* won two sound Oscars, for Best Sound, which awarded mixing, and Best Sound Effects Editing. As I've explained previously, today, this has all been moved under a single category of Best Sound. We'll begin with production sound mixer David Macmillan, who we haven't heard from since the production episodes. Here's a fun fact about David: he won every single Oscar he was ever nominated for. Three, in fact. In addition to *Speed*, he won for *The Right Stuff* in 1983 and *Apollo 13* the very next year after *Speed*. Here's what he remembers of that night in 1995, and just so you know, the other nominees for Best Sound were *Clear and Present Danger*, *Forrest Gump*, *Legends of the Fall* and *The Shawshank Redemption*, and the award was presented by actress Ellen Barkin.

### **DAVID MACMILLAN**

I didn't know, but I thought we had a good chance, having seen the films. I mean, like, *Apollo 13* I knew was a shoo-in, you know? *The Right Stuff*, that felt pretty good as well, too. But I wasn't as sure on it. But there weren't any really big sound movies out that year other than *Speed*. *Shawshank* is my wife's favorite film. She's watched it 20 times or more. Oh, yeah, she loves that film. I do, too, actually. I thought it was a great movie. But it was a quiet movie. Yeah, there are a couple of good ones in there.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

Here's sound re-recording mixer Gregg Landaker, who wasn't quite as optimistic as David.

### **GREGG LANDAKER**

We had no idea. We thought it was a good action film, but as far as Academy-wise, it didn't fit the mold. I remember – what movie did we do? Oh, God, there was one movie that Stevie and I thought we had it wired, and then I saw *The English Patient* that year during Academy screenings and I said, "We're screwed." All that movie was, was an airplane fly over the desert and one airplane crash in the sand dunes, but we were screwed from there on out. That was my thought, because it was just, that was an

Academy-type of movie, like *Lawrence of Arabia*-type of stuff. Whereas this one came out of nowhere.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

Gregg is talking about 1996 when he and Steve Maslow were nominated for Jan de Bont's *Speed* follow-up, *Twister*, and indeed, they lost the prize to *The English Patient* that year. But they can join the club on that one. The movie won nine Oscars. The other sound nominees that particular year were *Independence Day*, *Evita* and *The Rock*, and it's funny that Gregg tells this story because Greg P. Russell, a sound mixer friend of mine who was nominated for *The Rock*, tells a similar one of sitting in the crowd watching Anthony Minghella's sweeping epic win Oscar after Oscar and thinking to himself that he might as well get comfortable in his chair that evening. Back to Gregg Landaker.

### **GREGG LANDAKER**

As soon as I saw it, I went, "Nope, we're done. Forget it. And then the out-of-sync dialogue in *Twister*, that's going to kill us." *Twister* was, we got to go to a party and that's about it. Whereas this one came out of nowhere. It's like, we had no preconceived notion that it was going to win. You've got to understand, Kris, that when we go to the Academy, I don't go there expecting to give a speech. I was invited to the party, and that's the way we always looked at it. We never went there with the anticipation. We would have speeches. Yes, we had rehearsed speeches, but it's, like, "OK, if it happens to happen. If not, hey, let's go to Pink's hot dogs and have some hot dogs and we'll go back to the Governors Ball," type of stuff. We were just always there to enjoy, because we were a bunch of young kids. It's like, you know, not in our wildest dreams of growing up did we ever expect limos to be pulling up in driveways and whisking us off like Cinderella to the Academy of Arts and Sciences.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

Just to reiterate Gregg's Oscar bona fides, he won three other Academy Awards in his career, for *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Dunkirk*, which was his swan song in the business. Let's hear from Gregg's partner, Steve Maslow. He was along for the Oscar-winning ride with Gregg previously on two of those films.

### **STEVE MASLOW**

I remember us starting to speak and I heard my voice come back and so I started to stutter a little bit, because I was hearing a, you know, a second delay on the speakers, of my voice. It threw me a little bit. So, it was interesting. I remember that being a little overwhelming at the time. It's 15 minutes of fame. You'll get real nervous and once your name is called, the nerves just go away and then you go up there, and it's hard to take it all in because when you're on stage, the lights are so bright, you're lucky to see the first two rows of people. And you're not even looking at them. You know, I remember, I think it was on *The Empire Strikes* – I can't remember. The award that was up against *Ordinary People*. I don't remember what year that was, '80 or '81. I was the third guy to speak and everybody had thanked everybody and their mothers and I wasn't prepped for any speech, so I just looked at the award and then looked at the audience and said,

“This is quite an honor. Thank you very much. And then backstage Jack Lemmon came up to me and squeezed my cheek and said, “I loved your speech!” Yep, it’s 15 minutes of fame.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

Indeed, he’s talking about the year of *The Empire Strikes Back*, which beat out *Coal Miner’s Daughter*, *Raging Bull*, *Altered States* and *Fame*. *Ordinary People* was not nominated, which, due respect to the sound team on that film, would have been ridiculous. Now that we’ve heard these fond memories, let’s get in the time machine and revisit the moment *Speed* won Best Sound at the Oscars that year. This is going to be a blast from the past, OK? I mean, you’re going to get a Janet Reno joke from the ceremony’s host, David Letterman, at the top.

### **[CLIP: “THE 67TH ACADEMY AWARDS”]**

### **DAVID LETTERMAN**

Our next presenter successfully seduced two of Hollywood’s sexiest leading men, Dennis Quaid and Al Pacino. I’m referring, of course, to United States Attorney General Janet Reno. No, it’s not Janet Reno at all! Boy, wouldn’t that be something if it were? Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the lovely, talented and beguiling Ellen Birkin.

### **[MUSIC: ORCHESTRA]**

### **ELLEN BARKIN**

For centuries, philosophers have busied themselves with questions like, “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” “If a tree falls in the forest, and no one is there to hear it, does it still make a noise?” How about if a tree falls on Forrest Gump? Does he still keep on talking? While philosophers have wrestled with the esoteric properties of sound, the sound engineers have wrestled with the real properties of sound. The Oscar nominees for sound are Donald O. Mitchell, Michael Herbick, Frank A. Montañó and Arthur Rochester for *Clear and Present Danger*; Randy Thom, Tom Johnson, Dennis Sands and William B. Kaplan for *Forrest Gump*; Paul Massey, David Campbell, Christopher David and Douglas Ganton for *Legends of the Fall*; Robert J. Litt. Elliot Tyson, Michael Hernick and Willie Burton for *The Shawshank Redemption*; Gregg Landaker, Steve Maslow, Bob Beemer and David R.B. Macmillan for *Speed*. And the Oscar goes to Gregg Landaker, Steve Maslow, Bob Beemer and David R.B. Macmillan for *Speed*.

### **[MUSIC: ORCHESTRA – “MAIN THEME” FROM SPEED]**

### **GREGG LANDAKER**

Woo! I’d like to thank the Academy members for your vote of confidence. A special thanks to the film’s biggest supporter, Mr. Ted Gagliano at 20th Century Fox. To a man that gave rush-hour traffic a new meaning, our director, Jan de Bont. Skywalker Sound, Universal Studios for the use of their facilities. Stephen Flick, Weddington Productions. Gary and Greg Gerlich, Visiontrax. Our backup team, Sergio Reyes, Tenny Sebastian,

Gary Rogers and Ezra Dweck. And to my lovely wife of 18 years, Catherine Landaker, thank you for the patience and understanding with all the long hours. I love you.

**STEVE MASLOW**

Thank you to – thanks to the Academy for this award. Thank you very much.

**DAVID MACMILLAN**

Steve Bowerman, Kevin Patterson and my wife, Patty.

**[MUSIC: ORCHESTRA]**

**KRIS TAPLEY**

David is Scottish, by the way, and he was rocking a killer kilt there. Go check out the video at our website. The image closes on a beaming Keanu Reeves applauding the sound team. Now, let's move over to the other sound award, Best Sound Effects Editing. I gave you a brief history of that category's ebb and flow at the Academy Awards when we talked to these guys just a few weeks ago. The other two nominees for 1994 were *Clear and Present Danger* and *Forrest Gump*. Shockingly, James Cameron's *True Lies* was boxed out of both sound categories. Anyway, Stephen Hunter Flick was the lone prize winner here, though I think he would be the first to tell you the sound effects achievement on this or any film is the result of a legion's effort. Here are his recollections.

**STEPHEN HUNTER FLICK**

It's hard to describe. Who was the woman who gave me the award? She was in *Sex and the City*.

**KRIS TAPLEY**

That would be Sarah Jessica Parker, who presented the sound effects editing Oscar that year.

**STEPHEN HUNTER FLICK**

For some reason – I've got the Oscar in my right hand, and I'm standing next to her shoulder and shoulder on the stage, and maybe they called up Gregg and the other guy, the mixers. I thought I was going to float away. So, I grab – I just start holding hands with her. I mean, it's such a familial kind of thing. I didn't grab it. I just slipped my hand into hers. I thought I was going to float away like a balloon. Also, I'm superstitious. I had a chance to hold an Oscar. Best Picture – was it *Gone with the Wind* or something? And people pick it up and they go, "Oh, my God, they're so heavy." And I thought to myself, "I cannot pick up this Oscar because I will damn myself to hell and I won't get it."

**KRIS TAPLEY**

I know what he means, by the way. I've held a total of three Oscars in my time, and I was caught off guard both times by the winner sort of handing it to me suddenly. My instinct was to take them rather than politely decline. So, if I never win an Oscar, I'll

blame cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki and director Guillermo del Toro. Those were the Oscars for *Birdman* and *The Shape of Water*. Guillermo was actually double-fisting his awards for Best Picture and Best Director, so I will say that was kind of cool, to have two handfuls of Oscar. OK, let's get back in the time machine and revisit Stephen's big win.

**[CLUP: "THE 67TH ACADEMY AWARDS"]**

**DAVID LETTERMAN**

Folks, here to present the Academy Award for sound effects editing is an actress so talented they have bestowed upon her the heady honor of three names. Please welcome the star of *Honeymoon in Vegas* and *Miami Rhapsody*, Sarah Jessica Parker.

**[MUSIC: ORCHESTRA]**

**SARAH JESSICA PARKER**

For the past several years, somebody has explained what sound effects editing is. That's usually the high point of the evening. But this year, I have some good news and some better news. The good news is that the Academy's board of governors, all 36 of them, are ready to come out here and explain what sound effects editing is. The better news is that, instead, we're going to show you who the nominees are. Bruce Stambler and John Leveque for *Clear and Present Danger*; Gloria S. Borders and Randy Thom for *Forrest Gump*; Stephen Hunter Flick for *Speed*. And the Oscar goes to Stephen Hunter Flick for *Speed*.

**[MUSIC: ORCHESTRA – "MAIN THEME" FROM SPEED]**

**STEPHEN HUNTER FLICK**

I used to be a musician and one of the ways we figured out how to make sound effects were to take musical instruments and break them. Anyway, I'd like to thank the Academy so very much for this award. I'd like to thank a terrific, fabulous crew that put together an extraordinary soundtrack in no time at all. I'd like to thank John Wright for cutting the picture. And I'd like to thank my wife, Judy, who was an editor on the project as well. I'd like to thank Ted Gagliano and Kim Cooper and post-production at Fox. And I'd like to thank Jan de Bont. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

**[MUSIC: ORCHESTRA]**

**KRIS TAPLEY**

Don't you just love hearing that score blaring from the Oscars orchestra? Also, hardy fuckin' har on the jokes, guys. Some things never change, I guess. Have some respect for the craft! Anyway, before we move off of the sound team, you'll recall a few weeks ago that I alluded to a sort of controversy that arose as a result of the fourth sound mixer who received an Oscar for *Speed*: Bob Beemer. I'll let Gregg give you the background again and then explain what exactly happened.

## **GREGG LANDAKER**

Bob Beemer never had any touch on the final product. He was over in Universal doing pre-dubs at night. When I would come – he would start during the day and then I would overlap him coming over there. After I finished up my day at Skywalker, I'd come over and meet up with him at Universal. He was doing hard effects and I would come in, screen different hard effects and I would make changes on what he had done, and then both of us would dig in and try to get more product done during that evening before I had to break and go back home to take an eight-hour turnaround and get back to Skywalker the next day. Now how Bob Beemer ended up on the Academy Awards, that is a whole other story in itself. That was one of those things that – he had done so much work with me over there doing the key elements that I just wrote him down as, you know, part of one of the mixers on the show, not thinking the show, a year later, was going to go to the Academy Awards. I was just doing it because, you know, hey, this kid's busting his tail seven days a week just as hard as I am. It was one of those things that I caught a lot of flak later because people said that he didn't touch a fader on the final, and that created some protocol within the Academy of Arts and Sciences to kind of set up some rulings of, somebody can't be nominated for the final sound award if they were not X amount done with the final. And, just, look, we didn't know that was going to happen. I just – I threw his name out as a credit, because I wasn't one, you know, final judgment call on it. I just said, "Yeah, Bob helped me with the key effects. Sergio Reyes and Tenny helped out with foley and backgrounds." But it was one of those things. Bob was young in his career, I was like, you know, "I'll put your name on the film. Whatever. It doesn't matter to me." And then all of a sudden, then the thing wins and it's like, "Oh my lord," the controversy that came out of it. So, there's a lot of protocol that came out of that as far as vetting films, how much, you know, did this person work on the film. There became committees that came into vetting people that worked on the different films. People still to this day give me flack about it. And it's, like, I was just helping the guy get a sound credit. No different than that person saying "additional re-recording," you know? And that should have been where it should have been, was "additional re-recording." We should have had those guys down there. But I don't submit that paperwork to the Academy of Arts and Sciences. That's the producer and Jan de Bont that sends that into the Academy. Those are life lessons.

## **KRIS TAPLEY**

I will say, to Bob Beemer's credit, he declined any sort of interview about working on the movie for these reasons. He told me the same story, though, that the team included him in the credits as a thank you for working his butt off and then it ended up winning the Oscar, so, he was the beneficiary of that. Bob has gone on to win three other Oscars, for *Gladiator*, *Ray* and *Dreamgirls*. Now, let's move on to the third category for which *Speed* was recognized, though it not win: Best Film Editing. This is where we get to hear from the late John Wright one more time. *Speed* was John's second nomination after *The Hunt for Red October* four years prior, and I agree with one of his assistants, Kevin Ross, who said in a previous episode that he deserved to win this award and make it a clean sweep for *Speed's* Oscar trio that year. The other nominees were *Hoop Dreams*, *Pulp Fiction*, *The Shawshank Redemption* and the eventual winner, *Forrest Gump*. Still, the nomination caught John by surprise.



### **JOHN WRIGHT**

Completely unexpected. But, you know, somebody told me before they came out, they said, “Oh, you’ll get nominated. You’ll get nominated,” you know.? There used to be a guy that had a radio show back then, he became a director, actually. I can’t think of his name right now.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

He’s referring to filmmaker Rod Lurie, another friend of mine. Rod used to have a radio show out here in LA and he’s sort of famous for a few on-air wagers with nominees like Martin Landau, Mel Gibson and James Cameron. Rod bet them that they would win their respective races for *Ed Wood*, *Braveheart* and *Titanic*, and they took the bet. The payout? They had to thank Rod in their acceptance speeches if they did indeed win, and they were men of their word. Anyway, back to John.

### **JOHN WRIGHT**

I just happened to be listening to it one day when I was in my car going someplace, and he was talking about all the nominated pictures and he was predicting who would win, and he just happened to come along editing when I was listening to the radio, and he said, “Well, *Speed* should win, but it won’t.” And he said, “*Forrest Gump* will win,” and he was absolutely right. A couple friends of mine thought that *Speed* would win. They said, “Oh, no, *Speed* is by far...,” you know? And, so, I sort of had a little bit of my hopes up, but I – it didn’t surprise me that it didn’t win. But I was a little disappointed. I mean, everybody in the movie business who makes movies wants to go out with, you know, winning an Oscar, but it didn’t surprise me.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

Yeah, again – and I’ll get into relitigating the 1995 Oscars next week – but John should have won this award. In fact, I’d say at least two other nominees deserved it more than *Forrest Gump*: the nonlinear narrative of Quentin Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction* and the wrangling of 250 hours of footage captured over the course of five years for Steve James’ acclaimed basketball documentary *Hoop Dreams*. Anyway, John understood that *Speed* just wasn’t the kind of movie that wins Best Film Editing. Sadly, it’s no longer even the kind of movie that gets nominated for Best Film Editing. Every single year nowadays it’s just a boring sampling of the Best Picture slate.

### **JOHN WRIGHT**

Well, both the movies that I was nominated for were not the kind of movies that got nominated for acting, you know? And writing. *The Hunt for Red October* got nominated for the exact three categories that *Speed* did, you know? Editing, sound and sound effects.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

One award John did win for *Speed* was the BAFTA Award, the British equivalent of the Oscar. The sound team won there as well in the consolidated category of Best Sound. They were way ahead of the American Academy on having just one prize. But the film

got one more somewhat unexpected nomination across the pond: Best Special Effects. Now, *Speed* was not nominated for the equivalent Oscar prize, Best Visual Effects. But it was one of the seven finalists for the award. Let me just explain some Oscar protocol for you. Every year, the visual effects category is initially narrowed down to a list of 10 finalists and the key personnel present their work at something called a bake-off attended by members of the Academy's visual effects branch. That is where the actual nominations occur, in the immediate wake of those presentations. Back in 1994, there were still only seven finalists, and the other contenders along with *Speed* were *The Hudsucker Proxy*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Lion King* and the eventual trio of Oscar nominees: *Forrest Gump*, *The Mask* and *True Lies*. You still with me? OK, let's hear from *Speed*'s unit publicist, Bob Hoffman. Bob has a unique perspective on all of this because right after *Speed*, he left the world of unit publicity to become the executive director of communications and public relations at Digital Domain, at that time a new kid on the block, as visual effects houses go, and a company founded by filmmaker James Cameron, executive Scott Ross and pioneering makeup effects legend Stan Winston. Here's Bob recalling the bake-off, which took place on February 9, 1995.

### **BOB HOFFMAN**

I was looking at it very closely from my position then at Digital Domain working on the Academy campaign for Jim's film, and yet, when, you know, the bake-off happened, you had Bruno getting up there, you know, with Jim's guys. I don't remember who else got up there with Bruno, but was very clear that they did very well, and then, you know, obviously the *Forrest Gump* guys did very, very well, and that was kind of – I feel it was kind of the end of that ILM-dominant era for absolute wins and nominations. I mean, that dynamic shifted very dramatically after *Forrest Gump*. And you had Rob Legato who got up there. He got, you know, into the bake-off with *Interview with the Vampire*, and, I mean, he absolutely slewed everybody, and then you had the guys from *Speed*. It was a crazy year for me because it was, like, I was involved with *Speed* from having worked on the unit and then two of the films, because they were DD bake-off finalists.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

He was talking about Digital Domain's senior visual effects supervisor John Bruno at the beginning there, by the way. Let me also bring back *Speed*'s Sony Picture Imageworks-based CG artist Ron Brinkmann, who was part of the Academy bake-off presentation and also shared in the film's BAFTA nomination.

### **RON BRINKMANN**

I was surprised that it, even from an effects point of view, it got noticed as much as it did. You know, we were in the bake-off for US and then we actually were nominated for a British Academy award. So, that was kind of fun. At the same time, it was, like, *Forrest Gump* and stuff was that same year, and *The Mask* and *True Lies*, I mean, our shot count must have been a tenth of any of those. So, it was kind of surprising. But, you know, it was all kind of just well-integrated and it really drove the story forward. So, yeah, go figure.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

By the way, Ron saved all kinds of stuff from this period. He shared with me the Academy packet that the studio had to submit in order to qualify *Speed* for consideration in the visual effects race, as well as the bake-off program itself, which is pretty cool. I'll share all of that at our website if you're interested in taking a look. Anyway, again, alas, *Speed* was not nominated for this particular Academy Award. But the three it was nominated for make for a pretty good Oscar legacy if you ask me. It was a more adventurous time for the Academy, in these particular races, anyway, and I find that as the organization has vigorously expanded its membership, this kind of work just doesn't get a fair shake anymore. I mean, to be fair, movies like *The Creator* and *Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning* did receive sound nominations this year and the sound branch has found room for things like *A Quiet Place*, *Ad Astra*, *No Time to Die* and *The Batman* in recent years. But the last film editing nominee that was not a part of the Best Picture conversation was *Baby Driver* six years ago. Go back 30 years and you get nominations for *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, *Basic Instinct*, *In the Line of Fire*, *Crimson Tide*, *Seven*, *Air Force One*, *Out of Sight*, etc., etc. But, anyway, who cares, right? It's just the Oscars. It's a certain level of immortality, but if I learned anything in my two decades of covering it, it's not to take any of it too seriously. I often think of a moment I witnessed at the Academy's annual nominees' luncheon, which is a big event where all the nominees get together and eat the chicken and the peas, as the great Bruce Dern once put it, and then they all huddle up for the annual class photo, if you will. I was with screenwriter Graham Moore, who had been nominated for *The Imitation Game*, and I introduced him to composer Hans Zimmer, who was there as a nominee for *Interstellar*. Graham was giddy to meet this person whose music would often play as background inspiration as he wrote. Hans put his arm around Graham, turned him to face the spectacle of all those nominees, and he said something I'll never forget. "Take it all in. This is for you. It means nothing, and it means everything." Anyway, with that, let's wind down with Stephen Hunter Flick.

### **STEPHEN HUNTER FLICK**

OK, so, here's how winning an Oscar really shapes up. I apprenticed to Gene Ruggiero. Gene won the Oscar, maybe two, for – he worked with Lubitsch and he won the Oscar for *Oklahoma!* He's more proud of his flat-top movie, his aircraft carrier movie called *Men of the Fighting Lady*.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

Quickly, for the record, Gene Ruggiero, a film editor, was indeed nominated for *Oklahoma!*, but he won his Oscar for *Around the World in 80 Days*.

### **STEPHEN HUNTER FLICK**

He worked on *Ninotchka*, *The Shop Around the Corner*, whatever. Gene told me one day that he was more proud of his Long Island caddies golf tournament trophy, for winning it, than he was of his Oscar. And I thought he was just being funny. And it took me a few years to realize that if you win a golf tournament, you've won, and an Oscar is still a consensus.

### **KRIS TAPLEY**

Once again, nothing and everything.

**[OUTRO MUSIC]**

**KRIS TAPLEY**

Next week on *50 MPH*...

**KRIS TAPLEY**

We've heard from *Speed*'s deserving Oscar winners, but did the Academy get it all right that year?

**ANNE THOMPSON**

Well, it's really obvious that *Forrest Gump*, *Four Weddings*, *Quiz Show* and *The Shawshank Redemption* are all a certain kind of movie. The movie that we would all say should have won is *Pulp Fiction*.

**KRIS TAPLEY**

Join me and *IndieWire*'s Anne Thompson as we discuss and re-litigate the 67th annual Academy Awards.

**KRIS TAPLEY**

The one that I would actually put in there is Tim Burton for *Ed Wood*. I love that movie. He's never been a director nominee. I think it's his best movie.

**ANNE THOMPSON**

That was one of those unusual cases where a movie that nobody saw and nobody liked and, you know, it didn't do that well, ended up delivering the Best Actress winner, and she was incredible in it.

**KRIS TAPLEY**

From Best Picture to Best Visual Effects, we check the Academy's work and chart the legacy of 1994's winners and losers, three decades on.

**KRIS TAPLEY**

I have no notes on that win, either. That movie deserved it. The costumes are so good.

**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.