

English 345: American Independent Film

Pulp Fiction Production Timeline

Preproduction

- 1990: Tarantino and Roger Avary (friend and former coworker at Video Archives) author two sections of planned anthology film, eventually expanding sections into features (Avary: *Pandemonium Reigns*; Tarantino: *Reservoir Dogs*)
- 1992: *Reservoir Dogs* tours festivals; two Tarantino-authored films, *True Romance* and *Natural Born Killer*, debut in 1993 and 1994
- Tarantino receives \$1 million development deal from Jersey Films, Danny DeVito's production company; Tarantino uses money to fund offices for A Band Apart, a production company he formed with producer Lawrence Bender, returns to idea of anthology film and asks to use Avary's *Pandemonium Reigns*
- 3/1992: Avary joins Tarantino in Amsterdam to work on script; *Pandemonium Reigns* rewritten as "The Gold Watch" and Avary leaves to direct own project, *Killing Zoe*.
- 1/1993: *Pulp Fiction* script completed
- 1993: Jersey Films shows script to TriStar as part of "first-look" deal. TriStar passes, and Bender brings script to Miramax, who agrees to make the film.

Production

- 9/20/1993: Production begins with budget of \$8.5 million (actors Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman, John Travolta and Bruce Willis agreed to work for reduced fees, and all were paid the same salary, per agreement negotiated by Bender); Miramax head Harvey Weinstein had already sold foreign distribution rights for \$11 million.
- 12/1993: Eight-week shoot wraps.
- 1994: Avary persuaded to take "story by" rather than co-writing credit.

Post-Production

- Early 1994: Editing completed to meet scheduled Cannes debut
- Finished cut of *Pulp Fiction* not screened for focus groups, per arrangement between Tarantino and Miramax.
- 5/1994: *Pulp Fiction* premieres at Cannes Film Festival at 12:30 a.m. screening. Wins Palme d'Or.
- 10/14/1994: *Pulp Fiction* released in United States; plays in 1,100 theaters, unlike typical indie film "platform" release.
- Film makes \$9.3 million during first weekend, \$107.9 million in U.S. and \$212.9 million worldwide.
- Film critically lauded, with Tarantino receiving "Best Director" and *Pulp Fiction* "Best Picture" designations from the Los Angeles, New York and National Board of Review Critics' Circles.
- *Pulp Fiction* nominated for multiple Academy Awards (Best Picture, Director, Actor: Travolta, Supporting Actor: Jackson, Supporting Actress: Thurman, Editing: Sally Menke, Original Screenplay: Tarantino and Avary); wins for Original Screenplay.
- *Pulp Fiction* wins four Independent Spirit Awards, including Best Picture.