

## *Cascada*



When a crew of filmmakers and kayakers heads to the Mexican jungle to hunt big waterfalls, they find a place of unrelenting rain, heinous insects, thick mud, scary viruses and utter perfection. *Cascada*, a gorgeous short film by Forge Motion Pictures, follows the crew as they explore a world beyond expectations, where biting flies, tangled vines and shoddy hotel rooms can't detract from the unrivaled waterfalls and powerful rapids they discover.

### **Discussing the Film:**

*The following questions are intended to be used post-film screening to spark discussion and activities related to both the content and storytelling elements of this particular film.*

1. What were some of the most interesting images from *Cascada*? What sights and sounds do you remember the most about the film?
2. Anson Fogel shot *Cascada* over the period of a short vacation with a couple of his professional kayaker friends. If you could take a vacation anywhere in the world to shoot a film with your friends, where would you go and what would you film?

3. Both the kayakers in the film, and the filmmaker himself, are putting themselves at great personal risk to run these waterfalls. What do you think drives athletes to push themselves to extreme lengths for the sake of their sport? Do you think it is the same motivation that drives artists and filmmakers to create their art?
4. What do you think is the point of *Cascada*? Does a film like *Cascada* need to have a strong story to be successful?
5. If you could ask Forge Motion Pictures to film you and some of your friends, what would you be doing in the film?

### **Extensions:**

1. To rewatch *Cascada*, and check out Anson Fogel's other Forge projects, go to <http://forgemotionpictures.com/>.
2. Watch and compare another short kayaking film, *Of Souls + Water: The Mother*, made by Forge Motion Pictures: <http://vimeo.com/channels/staffpicks/41057927>, which happens to be a Vimeo staff pick. Which film did you like better? Which film had more compelling narration/subjects and why? Write a brief review on the film that you liked the best.
3. Create a mini adventure film festival in your class. Take a weekend and use iPhones to film your best adventure with a group of friends. Edit it over the next week in class and have a film fest viewing at the end of the week. (Note: iPhones and cameras can download video directly to your computer, where you can use programs like iMovie to do basic editing work.)

## **Filmmaker Conversation: Anson Fogel (Director) of *Cascada*.**

### **Where did you get the idea for *Cascada*?**

**AF:** It's part of the brand work we do for NRS. For most films I write and brainstorm about a couple of stories. This film is a huge departure from my normal process — Tim, Eric Boomer, the kayakers and I were going to go down to Mexico to run some waterfalls on vacation. I was burnt out from doing commercial work. I grabbed Skip, my long-time DP, and some gear and we went to Mexico. When the idea emerged, I really wanted to take a look at the nature of the magic of this place and the relationships between the athletes, filmmakers and the place. We had a great time, but it wasn't really a vacation.

### **Is there some piece of the story that you wish made it into the final cut? Did you face any challenges?**

**AF:** No. I had no constraints with this film. I work mostly within film and television, which have a lot of constraints. It was fully the story I wanted to tell. It only took me a week to edit it and I put a lot of time into the sound and music.

### **What is it like working with extreme athletes as subjects?**

**AF:** That's a really good question. It's similar to working with anyone who's at the top of their game. When you work on film, I want to work with the best of everything: editors, writers, athletes. Almost universally it's an immense pleasure. You're out doing what you love and they're out doing what they love. Everybody realizes they're very lucky. Our style and approach is to let the athlete do their thing. It's very collaborative but it's dangerous what they're doing, so you have to let them make all the decisions about their actions and their own boundaries. You can only capture something magic, you can't invent it. You have to let it happen. We're on this journey forever.

### **Do you think the film is successful? What do you hope your audience will take from it?**

**AF:** It was the least intentional thing I've ever done, so I was honestly surprised at the reaction to it. Success to me is a function of whether I am satisfied with the work. If I feel like I expressed something in the film that was vital, then it was a success. It has close to a million views on the internet...which for a short poem with kayakers is pretty amazing. I think it captures that sense of wonder for the place. I feel like we had a fresh perspective on this. I'm happy with it.

### **What piece of advice would you give to a student who wants to get into filmmaking?**

**AF:** Go make films right now. Tomorrow. Werner Herzog said, "even if you have to steal a camera." Also, if you're not really willing to work your butt off, you'll never succeed. We get 30 resumes a day for people who want to work with us. In them there's often this misnomer that we're living some glorious lifestyle, but nothing could be further from the truth. Filmmaking is not an easy way to make a living. Everybody has the tools now, but it's just as hard as it was in 1935 to tell a great story.

For more information on the film, the filmmakers, or to see other tour destinations and films, visit [www.mountainfilm.org](http://www.mountainfilm.org)

**What's next?**

**AF:** I'm always asked this and the answer is: 15 different things. We're preoccupied with making work. I'm always thinking about what's next and new challenges. I've gotten to the point where I don't even want to be part of the screening process, because I feel like re-watching the film is counter-productive. I need to be always looking ahead to the next project.