

William Monahan

Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, People, Directors, Film, Art, Moving, Drama, Actors, Want,
Real, Cutting, Way, Scripts, Needs, Guy, London, World, Class, Kids*

Dialogue is used to reveal not what we want to say, but what we are trying to hide.

~William Monahan

Star Wars was great at the beginning and crap at the end while Star Trek has always been interesting, and the difference is in the writing, and the thematic intentions.

~William Monahan

I think that gambling is a synthetic experience and that if you have any balls you gamble with your life. I have. So can everybody else.

~William Monahan

I need as much of the business of making a film to be in my own workspace. It really ought to be a bit more like doing a novel, alone, at first. I'm feeling my way.

~William Monahan

Look at what people are trying to conceal, and you'll see that they're revealing everything.

~William Monahan

I'm a homebody, as many writers are, and need to be by myself, and I like to be by the Atlantic Ocean.

~William Monahan

Out of all of the Star Trek movies, I happen to like the most recent one the best. I think it was the best one ever done.

~William Monahan

A writer is a performer as well. A writer isn't the literary department. That gets tried on but nothing's a script unless a good writer goes away and does his thing alone.

~William Monahan

On historical you take the known facts, dramatize them, and then stitch them together by invention. It's a projective thing.

~William Monahan

You can believe in originals only if you just don't know their context within literature. Certainly I believe in originality, but it lies with the teller, not the tale.

~William Monahan

You know a shooter when you see it. At least the creative people do. If a picture isn't obvious in the first draft you're kind of screwed.

~William Monahan

Redrafts can be very lucrative for me, but you must understand that if films go through many drafts or writers it's because someone doesn't want to do the picture and never will.

~William Monahan

You never know what people are going to go and see.

~William Monahan

I think probably everybody works most on the beginning and the ending.

~William Monahan

Whatever you cut when there's no deadline isn't really a cut. You're just pushing colors around.

~William Monahan

I sound like Warhol but only because I'm tired.

~William Monahan

You don't write for actors. Actors come for characters you've made up.

~William Monahan

I'm interested in stories about human beings. I don't care where or when they are set.

~William Monahan

When I was young I was only thinking of writing, and whatever was going on was unreal and comparatively unimportant.

~William Monahan

Most films go out like skydivers who have had their chutes packed by a committee of blind schizophrenics.

~William Monahan

Get Carter is a classic, but it did nothing in the United States. It came out on a double bill with a Frank Sinatra western.

~William Monahan

When I was very young, you would get the TV listings from The Globe and The Herald, and you would basically go through them, circle things, and map out your viewing week.

~William Monahan

You just have to know what you want and what you're doing and it leads to a kind of general well-being, which I think you sensed when you were there.

~William Monahan

There's only one way to prep, so far as I know. You have your script, you hire the people you want, you find your locations and your setups, everybody shows up and you shoot the film.

~William Monahan

If you decide to do Hamlet in a funny hat staged in a ruined factory, it doesn't make you Shakespeare.

~William Monahan

If you see, as I do, in edited film, you're going to end up as a director.

~William Monahan

I always write as I like to write, and I've been thinking about it because I honestly didn't realize how different my stuff is, until I started looking at other people's scripts as a producer.

~William Monahan

When I started writing screenplays, as early as I started writing anything, I hadn't seen any ordinary screenplays. I saw movies and figured out how I thought they should be written.

~William Monahan

I'm not a precious text protector, or anything like that, you know, because it's a much more vital form than that. You have to rock.

~William Monahan

The old days of screenwriting, and myths about screenwriting, are maybe over. It's a literary form, if you can wake up to it.

~William Monahan

I came into screenwriting from an odd direction, because the first screenplay that I read was and is better as writing than the top one percent of literary novels.

~William Monahan

It wasn't just British gangster films that really did for me as a kid, personally, it was British films in general.

~William Monahan

When I'm shooting, as much as writing, I see edited footage in my mind, so I work that way, and it's economical.

~William Monahan

I shoot very little film. If you just do coverage you're shooting any number of potential films instead of just one, and I was shooting just one specific film. Film is cheap but time is expensive.

~William Monahan

Because you're running an enterprise with two hundred-odd people, and it's really your responsibility to keep it moving quickly. So you have to know what you're doing, do it, and move on.

~William Monahan

Actors are players and if they're hot, or onto something, you let them go, or you and the actor can both get on to something. I always run out with lines as I think of them.

~William Monahan

London matters to me because it's the center of what I do for a living and has been since Tudor times.

~William Monahan

I write drama in the English language. If I wasn't working in London I'd be doing something wrong.

~William Monahan

The thing about movies is if somebody has an idea that works, it's in, and I say that as a screenwriter as well as a director.

~William Monahan

If you write a screenplay that gets circulated, you have a bigger readership than any literary novelist. And it's an educated audience as well.

~William Monahan

I love editorial and sound and music, and I was working with the best people, so you learn a lot.

~William Monahan

Novelists who get shitty about screenwriting invariably can't do it, or they can't hack it in the world of what's really, in truth, very bold and very public enterprise.

~William Monahan

I never viewed screen drama as a vulgar form, or a lesser one, and I've never written it left-handed.

~William Monahan

I don't like scripts leaking. On the other hand, the more real attention a script gets, the better.

~William Monahan

Some reviewer might be out there saying, obviously *Edge of Darkness* didn't come off because of the script, blah blah blah, but everybody has read the script, except the journalist attacking it.

~William Monahan

In all honesty a gangster picture was the easiest kind of film for me to get made.

~William Monahan

For some reason, I seem to work well with actors. I love working with them.

~William Monahan

If you need someone to come out of the sewer with a wire you don't hire someone who needs laborious collective instruction. You let someone do his job, whether he's a focus puller or a surgeon.

~William Monahan

Getting the correct writer is simply like casting. You wouldn't hire an

actor in order to tell him how to work. He knows how to work, which is why you hired him.

~William Monahan

Wisdom is not having illusions, especially anything in your own mind that elevates you above others.

~William Monahan

It's interesting to think that my children know more about the process than many mature critics.

~William Monahan

Refreshing honesty has been getting me in trouble since I was five, but it's probably had some positive effects - like not being a liar.

~William Monahan

As far as executing work is concerned, you do it all in order. You do it in contractual order. There's no overlap, it's just continuation of your ordinary work. You move from one project into another.

~William Monahan

T.S. Eliot, who learned to swim at the same beach as I did, just threw in the towel and moved to Cheyne Walk. I'm not going to do that but I'm not scared of the open channel between me and Britain.

~William Monahan

My gratitude to Ridley [Scott] isn't anything new. I named one of my kids after him. But he's a very important person to me.

~William Monahan

I don't think you need \$35 million bucks to make a movie. I think what people should do is make a lot more movies for a lot less money. You can really do it.

~William Monahan

I don't trust a lot of popular films because they seem to indicate that people would like to be super-heroes or vampires, and that's the last thing I mean by the useful mirror of art.

~William Monahan

I hate doing anything in offices. I either want to be out in the world or in my own environment - and it should be your own environment that you work in.

~William Monahan

You're not turning the picture over to a system or a process, you are the process, and the most important thing is to have things exactly as you want them.

~William Monahan

As a director, you're given a tremendous apparatus to work with, and very great talents are available to you.

~William Monahan

I learned my job from English dramatists. Tennessee Williams was no good for me, New York stuff was no good to me.

~William Monahan

Without English art, I never would have understood myself, my own family, or the New England world I lived in.

~William Monahan

I don't think the latest Star Wars pictures have any artistic intentions, but the original picture opened up epic science fiction.

~William Monahan

I never work until I have a deadline. You have to fit so much in a given day that you just don't get serious until you know when the deadline is.

~William Monahan

If you're playing around with a film, you're just playing around with it. But if it has to go into theaters, you get yourself into gear and finish it.

~William Monahan

Casting is all about availability, as much as anything else.

~William Monahan

I never write with particular actors in mind.

~William Monahan

I don't watch anything. I work so much. If I see a film, it's usually that I'll go in after working 15 hours and slam in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* or something.

~William Monahan

Casting is always subject to availabilities.

~William Monahan

The only answer to "Are you Beatles or Stones?" is, "I'm both."

~William Monahan

I have a lot of stuff that I never published because I always had a sense that novels were not finally going to be the way I made my living, because the form was dying commercially.

~William Monahan

I'd been working so hard making the film that I hadn't even emotionally processed the fact that I was a director.

~William Monahan

I was always entirely about work, about getting where I am now. If I'm not working I'm thinking about it, though at some point I learned not to talk about it very much.

~William Monahan

I'm not very precious at all, which I think people find surprising.

~William Monahan

You evolve in the ways in which you are precious. When you are the director, you are also continuing to write on the floor as you go along.

~William Monahan

I was particularly anxious that I shoot the tires out of the class system. All it is these days is a hobby of certain masochists, and certain sadists.

~William Monahan

Saying directors don't write because they don't type is very wrong, it's like saying Dylan doesn't write music because he doesn't write notation.

~William Monahan

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