

**Question and Answer Segment With Erin Coughlin**  
New York, N.Y. – Feb. 27, 2018

**Q: What made you come up with the idea for the Pop and Fizz’s movie guide series?**

**EC:** I started conceptualizing what would eventually become the Pop & Fizz series back when I was producing #ScreenThis (a popular segment on my Gal About network’s twitter account). Using 140 characters or less, I would pair and review two films together to share with our site followers.

It’s funny because despite the growing popularity of using streaming services, apps etc., the process of deciding what to watch now can in fact, turn out to be an overwhelming experience. I noticed that – not just when my friends and family got together, but even on average nights - we often spent more time ping-ponging between Netflix, Hulu, cable and our own private listing of videos debating what to watch instead of actually watching films that we enjoyed.

Another problem with relying on the streaming services’ “suggestion titles” is that they’re not only limited to limited titles carried by the service, but they often repeatedly toss in unrelated titles aka fillers that really have don’t have a lot in common with the other films. I noticed that a lot of other people were complaining about falling into this same time trap and just channeled my own excitement about movies to help them do something about it.

**Q: What is something that you hope the series accomplishes or that your readers will get out of using the series?**

**EC:** First, I hope they find it entertaining and resourceful. I hope it helps them not only spend more time discovering or enjoying great movies, but that it provides them with an accessible, fun outlet in which they can use it to connect with other people. The book covers a lot of diverse subject matter within the chosen genres, so it’s designed to appeal to all kinds of movie enthusiasts and create a safe conversational environment. It’s very interactive, but solo viewers can also enjoy it as well.

There’s also a whole new generation of viewers who are missing that personable sense of assistance that we were able to provide during my Blockbuster days, and then there’s the generations of people who have expressed nostalgia for that type of customer service and personable knowledge that they used to receive at the video store. The series is also a new way of bridging and renewing that personal connection with movie enthusiasts that streaming services and digital platforms strongly lack.

**Q: The film covers a lot of genres and a wide range of filmmaking. How do you decide what titles will be included in the movie guide series?**

**EC:** I ask four basic questions. “Does it successfully transfer from the big screen to the small screen etc.? Is this something that can be enjoyed on a regular / re-occurring basis? Is it possible to pick up on something new or different every time it is re-watched? What makes this movie special?”

My first concern is how the movie transfers from the experience of watching it on the big screen to every day life screens. Is it just as effective or is the experience equally enjoyable at home etc. as it was in the theater? Of course, I enjoy going to the theater, but as a huge movie buff, I want to be able to repeatedly enjoy the film. The second question is, “Is this film something that I would watch on a regular basis and continuously enjoy? Do I think other people would share this feeling?” Personally, I love movies that I can watch over and over again, and never feel like I’m bored by it. There are some movies that, although I really appreciate them, I didn’t initially like them enough to re-watch them ever again. Occasionally that feeling changes, I do revisit the film and develop a newfound appreciation for it. The third prerequisite regards whether or not it is possible to pick up on something new or different every time that the movie is screened. Good filmmaking, like any other art form, reveals something different every time that we re-encounter it. It could be anything from a production element to an actor’s subtle reaction to even something carefully placed in the background that a viewer might not have noticed before.

**Q: There are a lot of movie guides and film books out there. How is the Pop & Fizz series different?**

**EC:** I knew right away that I didn’t want the series to look or feel anything like most of the text heavy guides that are already available. I wanted to create something that was insightful, entertaining, playful, useful in everyday life, and most importantly, it had to be interactive. So much is becoming digital; I knew that I wanted to incorporate that aspect within the guide so that people could have more direct access to the actual films. Unlike a lot of other film guides etc. that feel more like a reference guide, the Pop and Fizz series is designed to simultaneously help others make the process of planning their evening a lot easier and help them spend more time connecting with others in a fun and personable way.

The book is broken up into different chapters, which focus on and explore specific movie themes, but there’s a lot more. Instead of just creating a book with repetitive plot synopsis’ about the films, I turned it more into a humorous, How To guide. Each chapter starts off with Playlist Picks, a list of songs from or inspired by the films mentioned in that chapter that you use can use to set the mood ahead of time or enjoy afterwards. Every movie pairing is accompanied by informational Cool Points, Stand Out Moments or Fun Film Facts. My favorite features include Pop and Fizz’s Brownie Point Screening Picks (add on titles), Alternative Title Selections and Pop’s Questions, which is basically an icebreaker discussion guide that will help you start personable conversations regarding the films in each pairing. There’s also a fun new take on a Movie Guide Key that should come in handy and garner a few laughs. Of course, the E-book versions feature

hyperlinks that take readers directly to say, iTunes, so that they have a direct link to the film in real time.

**Q: Did you learn anything new in the process of putting the first book together that you think is important for readers to know about?**

**EC:** Absolutely! First, the titles mentioned in the series, especially the Romance one, feature a good balance between male and female filmmakers, storytellers etc. During the process of putting the pairs together, I learned and even remembered very cool aspects surrounding the titles. The films all feature very strong, capable and complex characters of every gender. In some cases, the filmmakers adapted what were originally male dominated roles into equally successful, strong female-centric stories. Some original stories are so universal that they can be adapted to transcend gender, class, culture etc. and that's highlighted throughout the book. I was also especially proud to point out that there were a lot of very talented women (both in front of the camera and behind it) responsible for a lot of the film selections.

On a personal note, I love movies with quirky characters, constant movement / action and snappy dialogue. You have the great screwball comedies of the 1920s – 1940s, the sexual farces of the 50s and 60s, but a ton of great romantic films were released between the 80s and 90s. There's something about the romantic films I grew up watching that remain my favorite. There was more of a balance between male and female roles etc. The characters were equally quirky and loveable, the stories felt more original and the romance didn't feel forced. Oddly, as an adult I really enjoy the romantic films set in the grungy and strange New York I remember from that period ( eg. Moonstruck, Desperately Seeking Susan, Working Girl, Walking and Talking). And on a side note, if anyone feels or notices that some films were left out of this first book, I would like for them to know that those titles might be featured in a runner-up supplement or another book in the series to be released at a later time.

**Q: What was the hardest challenge you faced while working on the series?**

**EC:** Would you like that listed alphabetically or chronologically? :laughs: There are two things I noticed. First, I noticed that since the mid to late 2000's, the production of romantic films (especially great romantic comedies) took a serious drop in numbers. I had a harder time coming up with more modern titles for the book because of this. Now, it's a rare treat to find a truly wonderful romantic film (eg. The Bick Sick) outside of say, The Hallmark channel. As much as I enjoy those romantic films, I have noticed a few negative traits in modern films in general that cause me to return to my favorites. A lot of women I know have also expressed their mutual disconnect with recent films over their consistent portrayal of women as flat, bumbling, socially awkward, whiney or shrewish characters. I like to think that the films in this book feature realistic, multi-dimensional women who can hold their own against their male counterparts.

Whereas the idea for the series was more organic, the physical act of putting the book together and figuring out how to translate the text into something tangible – that was both

fun and visually stimulating -was another ordeal. Luckily, I have a background in graphic design, so I was able to utilize all of those skills and create a layout and graphics that held true to the feeling I wanted the book to evoke. The hardest part was the devil in the details. The little things you have to edit and adjust. And edit and re-adjust. As frustrating as that was, the real key to finishing something is to always remember why you started doing it in the first place. I kept remembering why I came up with the series and the excitement that greeted me every time I told someone about what I was working on. Their interest and excitement fueled my own during times that I needed it most.

**Q: What's next for you and our new friends Pop and Fizz?**

**EC:** While I'm busy promoting the first in the series, Pop and Fizz will be busy putting together titles for the next few books in the series. Fizz is working on mysteries, thrillers and sci-fi. Pop's out in the field asking people for their help on putting together a list of comedies. They're both very excited about it and they want me to remind everyone to participate in their fun posts online so that they can make the new books even more special. :laughs: I've recently finished a few screenplays and fictional novels, so I'm trying get those stories in the hands of people who can help me bring them to a larger audience. I'm also booking guests for the upcoming new season of my online show, and hoping to be invited to cover or attend more events over the next year.

Contact [VerbiageMedia](#) or visit [www.ecoughlin.com](http://www.ecoughlin.com) :

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