



Screwed

Alexander Crawford

USA, 1996

85 minutes ■ Colour/16mm

Production Company: **St. Dymphna**

Productions

Producer: **Andrew Gurland, Todd**

Phillips

Cinematographer: **Alexander**

Crawford

Editor: **Alexander Crawford**

Sound: **Sal Levin**

Music: **Todd Phillips, Tom Hazelmyer**

Principal Cast: **Al Goldstein, Ron**

Jeremy, Tianna Taylor, Leena, Big Bob

Print Source/Foreign Sales Agent:

STF Films, 409-225 Lafayette Street,

New York, New York 10012, USA.

Tel: (212) 925-3440.

Fax: (212) 925-3430.

Al Goldstein is a legend. Publisher of the notoriously grotty "Screw Magazine", New York City's longest-running X-rated weekly, and host of New York's raunchiest cable-access show, "Midnight Blue", Goldstein is the archangel of modern porn. He is also a monster, equally repulsive and compelling, a fascinating figure of modern sleaze and manipulative politics.

Director Alexander Crawford seems to have complete access to Goldstein's world. We go on the set of a hard-core shoot in L.A.; we sit in on a "story" meeting in "Screw"'s New York office; we see a lot of images, most displayed by Goldstein, which (literally) straddle the border of titillation and disgust. Lording over it all is the obese, extremely funny, horrifyingly misogynistic Goldstein himself.

It's hard to relate how powerful Goldstein's presence is. He rips the camera from Crawford's hands as he twists the filmmaker's intentions to suit his own agenda. He turns his honest, if disingenuous, spite for his ex-wives into big bucks and hours of cable time for massive audiences. We get sucked in by his ability to objectify everyone around him and make them love him. Humanity has never seemed so base.

Crawford tries everything to counterbalance this force of nature. He profiles heavy porn consumers – including a one-legged, obsessed collector named Big Bob – who see Goldstein as a saviour. He talks to the leader of the Guardian Angels, whose anti-"filth"

rants seem much more perverse than Goldstein's measured judgement of porn's place in the world. Skin trade stars give Hollywood-style interviews, and the proceedings are constantly interrupted by Goldstein TV spots, paralleling his current life obsessions.

Watching *Screwed* is a deeply unsettling, even slimy experience, yet it is an utterly fascinating example of how money, politics and morality shape the American Dream.

– *Noah Cowan*

Alexander Crawford began working in documentary as an assistant cameraman, then as a cameraman for such films as Christine Choy's *Yellow Tail Blues* and Todd Phillips' *Hated: G.G. Allin and the Murder Junkies*. He later turned to producing television documentaries for The Arts & Entertainment Channel and Lifetime Television. *Screwed* (96) is his first feature.

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