



## **WELCOME TO WASHINGTON MS. SALKE**

by Mark F. Martino  
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My attention to current events hasn't been all that current because my head has been in the post production of "Spaceberg." When I momentarily poked my head up and looked around, I noticed that there's been an uptick in LSD activity. Not lysergic acid diethylamide usage, but low swinging dick behavior.

LSDs believe raw, untamed belligerence is the path to fame and fortune. They substitute lies delivered repeatedly at a high volume for verifiable facts. They prefer name calling over logic or any kind of reasoning. Intimidation, especially via sexual harassment, fills in the rest of their day. Whatever they do is focused on maintaining their power at all costs.

There's a certain species of LSD called the Hollywood Power Player. Roy Price is one of them. I didn't know he was when, a few years ago, Price took over Amazon Studios. Back then I was ecstatic that he had their website set up to allow screenwriters to submit scripts.

My screenwriter friends and I submitted our scripts. Being a board member of the Northwest Screenwriters Guild, I also made multiple attempts to contact Price. I invited him speak at one of our meetings and discuss how we at the NWSG could work with Amazon to provide them with quality screenplays. I never heard from him, but no big deal. I'm not that well connected so it I'm used to making cold calls that remain frigid.

When Price's sexual harassment behavior was exposed, I was glad he hadn't contacted

me. Turns out, he's the kind of guy who values maintaining his power over making great movies. Price came from Hollywood royalty and was well connected. Instead of using those connections to make deals that would be in the best interests of Amazon, he made deals that let him follow the path of least resistance. With almost no oversight from Seattle, Price put together deal after deal of dubious value. It's no wonder that he had no idea how to develop small projects like ours.

So, I was relieved to find out that Jennifer Salke replaced him as head of Amazon Studios. As powerful as she is, it appears that Salke is not a Hollywood Power Player.

Jeff Bezos has directed her to develop mega budget projects at the scale of "Game Of Thrones" and back off of quirky comedies and other small movies. That's too bad because, from what I've read about Salke, she's good at developing projects of all sizes and budgets. In particular, she's is good at nurturing comedies. At NBC, she guided Superstore, The Good Place, and others to success. Those are the kinds of projects that are antidote for LSD behavior.

In correcting the course of Amazon Studios, I hope Salke reconsiders such projects and dedicate a portion of their budget and effort to small projects. Properly managed, they can get a lot of bang for their bucks, make some money, and make successful small projects the seeds for new mega budget franchises.

Maybe this time with more oversight from Seattle they can be successful. Even better, would be making small online shows in Seattle. Until we build up our movie making infrastructure, we can leave the billion dollar projects to LA.

So, even though you live in LA, welcome to Washington state, Ms. Salke. If you'd like to see what we do, let's talk about "Spaceberg."