

Inside the head of Director Theodore Melfi

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As part of our regular section "inside their heads", we put a few questions to Theodore Melfi – Director @ Area 51 Films (and take a look at his spec spot "the attempt" below)



1. So what drew you to the dark side ... directing?

My father always said, "If you want to be something then you better be good fucking at it. Cause life don't treat failures kindly". And since I was not a good plumber, I chose the next most logical career.

2. Doing the gig ... no problem. Getting the gig ... hmmm.

Shooting is icing – I shoot literally all the time – anything I can get my hands on that is not porn... whether it be a music video, short or feature... Getting the job is the job. It's all about the treatment for me. Any monkey can show up with a camera and shoot a board – but can you conceptualize and strategize on paper... Like all creatives must do. Can you present? Can you create on paper? We all know the job is damn near over before one frame of film runs through the gate.

3. The only thing between you and a gold lion is ... (most scripts? The client? The process ...?)

Nothing. Send the boards... See you in France.

4. Shoot days: The lifeblood? The drug? Or accelerated aging?

Shoot days are like Prom night... So much preparation... So much effort... Then the drinking and the afterparty... then poof... It's all over and you've got a few phone numbers, several best friends and a tough case of gonorrhea.

5. The Pack Shot ... The devil incarnate?

What's a pack shot? Is that a porn term?

6. What's your personal secret to managing all of the "personalities" involved in any one project?

Calm. Peace. Patience. Every leader needs to create an atmosphere of safety. We are going to get the job done. It is going to turn out famously. Every problem is its own solution. Every unforeseen circumstance brings us one step closer to discovering genius.

7. Shoot with your mobile/ cell phone, edit & post FX on your lap top, output as quicktime, upload to net. Bingo. Now if we just dispense with the client! Where's it all heading? At the end of the day ...

At the end of the day nothing ever changes. Just like your mother. "Oh, this year I'm gonna loose 15 pounds". Sure you are. And this year hi-def is going to replace film... Sure it is. And this year client direct will eliminate the agency... Sure it will.

Here's my theory...

People like to say shit. And they say shit all the time. Some say shit because they truly believe shit will happen. But most say shit just to be saying shit. And since all shit rolls downhill... Well... That's a lot of people getting full of shit.

Good thing we have comedy.

And some recent work from Theodore:

Spots Title: "The Attempt"

Click here to view the spot:

[VIEW](#)

Commentary from Craig Lederman, Brian Morgan, and Ted (the director).

It can be a common theme in this business: frustrated creative folks banding together to shoot something on the edge...

Writer Craig Lederman and Art Director Brian Morgan approached director Theodore Melfi with an idea about a young man trying to commit suicide... Utilizing the fumes of the new Toyota Hybrid Prius. "The Attempt" is an utter failure, thanks to the super low emissions of the environmental friendly Prius.

Melfi directed the spot through his production company Area 51 Films (Santa Monica). Executive Producers Phyllis Koenig and Preston Lee supported the project on the heels of

another commercial - the old piggy back approach.

With the help of friends in the production world, the spot was edited (Frank Effron @ Cut and Run), transferred (PJ @ Company 3), mixed (Mark Meyuhas @ Lime) and then emailed to ten million people and... Here we are.