



HOLLYWOOD

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-COVER-

**Writer/Director
Calvin Simmons**

**Presents *Float*...a
story about failure and
being okay with it.**

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-INSIDE-

- Screenwriter's strike...What's your opinion?
- The Joe D. Story – From Detroit to Hollywood
- Action On Film Winner Sellus Wilder talks about personal craft as a filmmaking.

Synopsis

Behind the glitz and glamour of Hollywood, lies an underworld of sex and drugs, where young people looking for money and fame easily fall victim to life on the streets of Los Angeles. **Waiting For Tomorrow**, takes a glimpse into this dark world as it follows a young couple living on the streets of Hollywood who are desperate for a way out. During what is to be the couple's last 24 hours in Los Angeles, we find seventeen-year-old Lori staying at a shelter for runaway teens while her 21-year old boyfriend PJ wakes up on the shores of Venice beach. Once they meet for breakfast, PJ confirms with Lori his plan to sell marijuana to come up with the money for their trip north. But after departing to make the deal he instead chooses to visit old acquaintances from his days of streetwalking to deal with something more profitable - heroin.

Meanwhile, Lori ties loose ends with her caretakers at the shelter. Afraid that they will stop her from leaving, she runs back and forth between the shelter and getting high with friends to avoid her exit interview. Friends turn to sexual predators and as a result, she's sexually assaulted. If that was not enough, her choice to ignore her caretakers is hampering her chances of ever returning to the shelter if need be. In the end, life's harsh reality is destined to catch up with both of them. Moral choices become the fault line in an endless day. By next morning, the couple has to face reality and decide whether being together is all that matters. But as time runs out, one can't help feel the necessity of Lori and PJ being together. It is the only thing that they can look forward to in contrast to dying on the streets. To Lori, PJ is proof that love exists. For PJ, Lori is purpose. It is something that he has never found. In his mind, purpose is the reason why they will always be together.

George Gomez is *Waiting for Tomorrow*

by Patrice Ewell

Thirty-one-year-old, Writer, Director and Producer **George Gomez** was born in Managua, Nicaragua in 1976. Leaving a war torn country, he arrived in Los Angeles, CA in 1986 with his family and was faced with a new life and culture. His experience growing up in the urban world of the San Fernando Valley was a culture shock that extended way beyond learning a new language.

It also meant learning the survival codes of the streets of Los Angeles. Gangs, graffiti and Hip Hop sub-cultures saturated the city. Gomez had to learn quickly to adapt to its new surroundings or suffer the consequences. Similar to other young Latinos in his position, his future looked rocky and uncertain. The limited choices presented to him seemed to be getting the best of him until one of his junior high school teachers presented him with the opportunity to volunteer at Los Angeles Youth Network (LAYN): a runaway shelter for teenagers located in Hollywood.

Gomez attended UC Santa Cruz and after two years began to explore his passion for film and social issues. After two years, He went to UCLA. **Waiting for Tomorrow** is PHAT Network's feature debut. Written by George Gomez, it combines both the rawness and independent spirit. Inspired by his days at L.A.Y.N., the film focuses around homeless teenagers living in the streets of Los



George Gomez

Angeles. Working closely with L.A.Y.N., Gomez sets out to make a film that is raw, expressive and down-to-earth about teenage homelessness in America.

Hollywood Scriptwriter: What is your educational background?

The film program at UCLA taught me all aspects of filmmaking. I really understand the craft of filmmaking and graduated from UCLA in 1998. It was important for me to know what everyone

does and decided I wanted to be a filmmaker. I wanted to cover every aspect. The web and digital technology just came out and e-mails were new exploring digital technology. I was fascinated about learning what it takes as far as technology: learning adobe, tml animation, web interaction, web experience and to explore different elements. Once I graduated, I was convinced digital filmmaking was my future.

How long have you pursued this career?

For about 12 years, I really fell in love with filmmaking in college.

What did you do before entering into this industry?

I have always loved music, poetry and spoken word artists.

What interest you in becoming a screenwriter and a director?

Every aspect of film fascinated me and I wanted to do everything. I developed the concept of creating a network of Los Angeles artists that shared this do-it-yourself philosophy. Using his knowledge of computers, video editing, graphic design, web authoring, and desktop music publishing, I launched the artist network in January of 2000 under the name P.H.A.T. Network (Punk, Hip Hop, and Arts & Techno Network). Shortly after PHAT Network opened its doors, I began networking and recruiting artists from all over Los Angeles.

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Why choose these fields?

Filmmaking involves everything. It involves that collective effort. I like to work with people. I am not the type of person to sit in a room for months at a time. I will endure the writing process which is a very lonely process and do that to get my ideas on paper. My ultimate goal is to make that film. Anytime I put myself behind the writer’s chair, I only write enough to get me to the production floor. A lot of people will spend months and years writing their scripts and it works. For me, I can never do that. The whole time I’m writing it, I can be making it. The whole thing between the writer and production staff is the fact that the writer always has a connection to their work. You give birth to the script, write it, it’s your baby and you’re scared that people will pick it apart.



Stephanie Pettee stars as *Lori* in *Waiting for Tomorrow* written by George Gomez.

That’s what filmmaking is about, taking it apart. It’s about taking the concept you’ve written and saying how do we turn it into a film? As a writer, you are not willing to let it go and be torn apart. But most of the time, that is what is going to happen. I am not saying you do a film and turn it into something completely different. It is the idea of creating enough on paper to show a vision to someone. This is what we are going for and asking the director do you see this as a film?

How is your directing style different from your screenwriting process?

Once I write things down on paper I get behind the camera. I then realized, right away being on set, making decisions on the fly, that you can never see while you writing. From a directing aspect of things,

especially making a film on an extremely low budget, you go into a set thinking something, and five minutes later thinking, oh my goodness, this is not going to be the way I thought it would be. You have to be on your toes and be able to make confident decisions on the fly. When writing you have all the time in the world, in a sense to say where you want this scene to go, and if you cannot think of it then, you can walk away and come back the next day. You can get a cup of coffee and think about it. Being a director, I did not have that luxury. I would be on the set and I knew I would have to make decisions right away. There was no going back and changing it because I may not be able to get this location again; I need to shoot this today.

Being controlling on a set is not good and you need to believe in your crew, and in the end, it needs to be that collective vision.

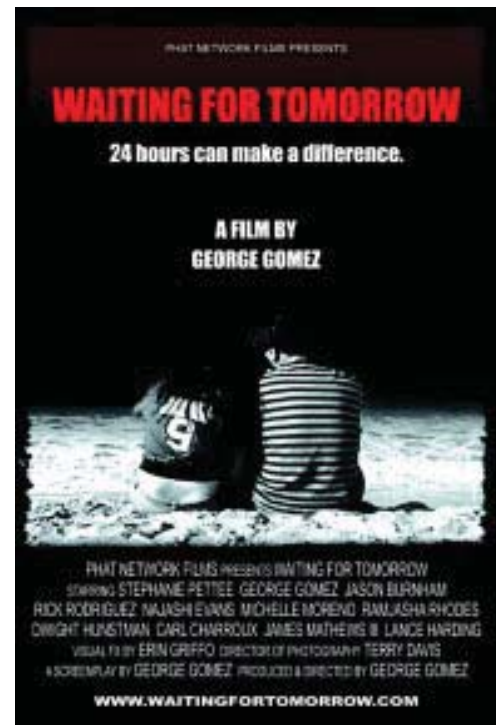
How have your life experiences influenced the kinds of movies you write?

I am making a film about homelessness only because I have seen what they have gone through. I didn’t think I could ever make a film where I am not involved in the subject. I need to be involved in the subject. I need to be completely involved in the film. Coming from a war torn country, I need to make films that have some sort of message that is very

personal and has something to say about the society we live in. That is very important to me. I need to have that in my scripts and my films. It is very personal to me, in a sense, that they are talking about issues that matter to me a lot. It is not about entertaining people, but creating an art form that reflects the society we live in.

What genres do you specialize in writing?

I think writers put writing in a box and it falls apart. It is not really about genre but the feeling you are trying to convey. For me *Waiting for Tomorrow* should be called an urban film and drama. It is also a hip hop movie because there is so much music involved. You can’t really pigeon hold it because once you do that, it will fall apart because it has so many



different things involved. It can’t be categorized as one thing. I see it as the culture of Los Angeles, which is very diverse. I want to use poetry and music at their full potential, and spoken word, so that it involves all of these things when I create a film.

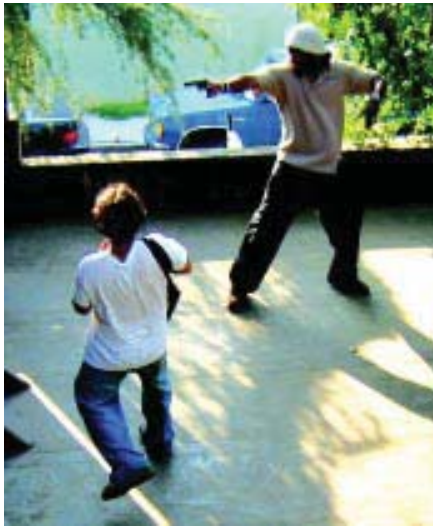
How do you come up with your concepts of putting a script together?

I try to start with a very thin skeleton. I start with a three point structure. I start off with what is going to be the conclusion of this film? What is it that I am trying to convey? What is the message and what do I want people to walk out of this film thinking about? What do I want the audience to experience while seeing the film? Once I have that concept, I break that down into the three point structure. I say how am I going to get there?

Not necessarily dialogue or so forth, maybe three or four actions I see will lead me to that point, I start building the meat. I start thinking hey; this is what needs to happen before the first act ends. Okay how do I build this act and what are the characters that need to be involved to make that happen? Once I evolved to having the characters and having that as a creative bullet I create a series of events. Once I have the bullet points, I start thinking of dialogue. The bullet point process, from having a concept to actually

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“Waiting for Tomorrow” cont’d from pg 29
 having bullet points of a scene may take a month to create. But once I have the dialogue, it is a no brainer. I know what is going to happen. By having the screenplay



Scene from **Waiting For Tomorrow** written/directed by George Gomez.

minimalist, I can have the screenplay in a month.

Explain how you decide on the budget for each film.

I stretched my budget on this film. We had a couple thousand to shoot with. We said okay, how do we make this film with no money? As a collective effort, I involve people that come up with the resources. I am conventional in that way. Let’s look at this script and break it down to the shooting schedule. The concept was about shooting the film for nothing.

What was the budget for Waiting for Tomorrow?

\$10,000

Explain the name of this movie.

It was the idea of a kid living on the street waiting for tomorrow, waiting for that day when it would get better. He was waiting for the day when he would not have to depend on stealing and drug dealing. The life of a homeless kid is really day to day. Okay, how am I going to survive today? This is a question they ask themselves. That’s where the name and concept of the film comes from because it takes place in 24 hours. The couple in the movie are tired of the streets of Los Angeles and is looking for a way out.

From the time you sat down to write it, how long did it actually take you to finish?

Two years.

Is it a message movie?

No

How does this movie depict American culture?

It exposes the problem of homelessness in America that society chooses to ignore.

What message is this film sending to teens that have parental support and teens that do not?

The message is the same. The message is your actions will catch up with you. People think by nature their actions will not affect them. Because we live in such a fast-paced overly censored culture people think they deserve everything now and they will do whatever it takes to get it now. Your actions justify your results.

What’s next for you as a writer and director?

I am in the process of shooting a screenplay. I have another project in the works, a book about the Revolution of Nicaragua looking into Latin America.

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