

A LETTER TO OUR FUTURE AUDIENCE

The Tragedy of Petey Pompeii

By Mark Anthony Smith

Many people have been asking me, “what the hell is this Petey Pompeii move about!?!” And I wish I can say it in five words. Or even five sentences. But I can’t. I’ve tried. Sometimes I just tell people it’s about how fucked up things get. Or, I just shrug my shoulders and pretend I have no idea. But in reality, I do know what this movie Petey Pompeii is all about. I wrote this short screenplay about five or maybe even six years ago. I wrote it after I had gone through a crazy screenwriting marathon. I wrote two full length screenplays in one month. “A Love Story With Guns” in two weeks; This was a 150 page screenplay. Then I wrote “Screenwriters!” Another full length script, which was finished in one week. They weren’t the greatest, but they were wild crazy stories and I had fun writing them. Nothing really came of them, except they gave me just a little more experience in writing. But then I wanted to write one more script. And after receiving a text message from a friend about how suicide would be a wonderful thing to experience...(Yes, I receive text messages in that tone.) I decided to write about how stupid it would be to commit suicide. So I sat down at an It’s A GRIND Coffee Shop and wrote the script and I had no idea where it was going. Two hours later and 29 page later I stopped... I had nothing left to write. So then I realized there was nowhere else to go with it. This would not be a 150 page screenplay. It would be a short. And so I sent this one out to a few friends and the response was amazing. Most of my scripts consisted of silly gags filled with dick and fart jokes and with not much of a real point... But this one actually meant something to me.

The Tragedy of Petey Pompeii was inspired by how stupid it is in my opinion to just give up on life. How many people do we know committed suicide? We all know someone who had the guts to pull it off. One of the most stupidest and gutsiest things to do. So when I first wrote The Tragedy of Petey Pompeii, the story mainly focused on a female character that was based on so many females I have met. She is a misguided, lost, dysfunctional, passionate, stubborn, loving, shallow, and curious young girl. She has an addictive personality, and everyone around her is just as adrift and in spiraling dysfunctional fashion just as much as she is. Inspired by the world I found myself in. The film was written mainly in narration and with our lead character Kate breaking the fourth wall. The best way I can describe the direction of this film... A young woman standing at the edge of a cliff and as she is about to jump her entire life flashes behind her eyes... mainly the bad part of her life! The film follows her at the age of 17-22 years old... Probably the most difficult years for everyone.

So as we are invited and locked inside her troubled thoughts, we are allowed to watch her tormenting and traumatized mind narrate her life. What better journey to take an audience on, than to go inside someone’s head and observe as their life is unfolded? In a cynical kind of way. Reminds me of this song... it goes “All the thoughts you never see... You are always thinking. The Brain is wide. The Brain is deep. Oh, are you sinking?” But in this case, we get to see the thoughts. And as Shakespeare’s great quote goes... “There is nothing either good nor bad. But, thinking makes it so.” Well what makes this

film so special is that we get to go inside someone's rotten and beaten down mind. We go on this journey of watching Kate hurdle through sexual partners in high school, break hearts of those in love with her, torment her already confused and scared boyfriend, experiment with psychedelics in the woods, disgrace her family traditions, survive drug addiction, and watch the one person who truly loved her take his own life... Petey Pompeii.

The film stars Rene Michelle Aranda who I truly had a great time working with on this project. Rene sacrificed a lot to portray the character Kate. Kate experiences a lot of pain and humility and this role was not easy! She is an extremely devoted actress. The film was also produced by three of my great friends Daniel Roxburgh, Destiney Haddox and Skyler Gonzalez. The trio devoted a lot of time and their own money into this project. Most of the actors were close friends of mine and some were new actors who auditioned and are now new friends. Many drove far, and stayed long to help put this film together on a small budget. Not more than six hundred dollars was spent on this film. And by today's standards that is impossible. The film was shot in one month and took one long year to get edited. Because the film is mainly told in flashback form we decided to shoot in black and white. We wanted to create something real. We wanted to take what films and television usually glorify such as drugs, sex and violence... and turn it all inside out and show how scary they can be. But more than anything I wanted to create something that everyone can relate to. This film is dark. It's uncomfortable at times. And some scenes may make you want to close your eyes. And although we had so much fun and laughs making this film... there is something very deep and personal with this story for me. And I am more than excited to have this film come into full fruition. My goal as writer/director of The Tragedy of Petey Pompeii is to offer hope to those who have suffered a lot of pain and tragedy in their lives. Also, stay tuned for our full length version that will be shot later this year... After The Storm.